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THE
L A S T D A Y S ;

THEIR

NEAR APPROACH & PERILOUS CHARACTER,

INCLUDING

**A NEW INTERPRETATION OF THE SEVEN VIALS—THE BATTLE
OF ARMAGEDDON—AND THE COMING OF
THE SON OF MAN.**

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DOWNFAL OF POPERY."

**LONDON: T. WARD & Co., PATERNOSTER-ROW.
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1843.



P R E F A C E.

The present work consists of an attempt to ascertain, from those copious revelations of futurity contained in the Scriptures, the History of the Church, the destiny of the Jews, and the fearful judgments upon the Anti-Christian and Heathen world, during the approaching period, termed—**THE LAST DAYS.**

The hacknied objection, that the Church has nothing to do with Unfulfilled Prophecy, appears to the Author a most pernicious error. The abuse of a thing constitutes no argument against its use, and he who at the present fearful crisis, discountenances the diligent and prayerful study of the Prophetical Scriptures, does his best to deprive the Church of an exhaustless mine of comfort, encouragement, and instruction. It is, indeed, no common privilege, especially in the present eventful and alarming state of the world, to be able to read the apparently discordant signs which fill the political horizon, and trace the progress of that conflict

between the powers of light and darkness, which will ultimately issue in the utter overthrow of the latter. “*The wicked shall not understand, but the wise shall understand.*” “*Blessed is he that heareth, and they that read the words of this Prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand.*”

In Prophecy, if in any thing, the old maxim holds true, “*Bene orasse est bene studuisse.*” The Author, therefore, although he has not neglected human aids, has principally trusted to the guidance and assistance of the Great Author of Inspiration for success, in his efforts to ascertain the import of the Prophetic Writings. In navigating this sea,—strewed as it is with the wrecks of by-gone voyagers, and filled with rocks, quicksands, and whirlpools,—the only Pilot that can be safely trusted is,—Dependence upon Heaven.

Bristol, May, 1843.

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ERRATA :

Page 44,—8 line from bottom, for (ל'עך) *read* (ל'צך).

“ 53,—Line 17, for “rightful” *read* “frightful.”

“ 94,—7 line from bottom, for “Dan. xxiv. 29,” *read* “xii. 11.”

“ 101,—Line 8, for “frantically” *read* “franticly.”

THE LAST DAYS,

ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE SOUNDING OF THE SEVENTH TRUMPET.

The period of the seventh trumpet an interesting subject of inquiry—Proofs that this trumpet has not sounded—Its true date a few years after the time, times, and half a time—This trumpet pre-eminently one of woe, yet hailed with delight by celestial beings—The kingdom of God set up—The world at present ruled by the “Prince of the power of the air”—The kingdom of God is introduced by judgment upon his enemies—The temple of God in Heaven opened—Closed during the seals and six first trumpets—The ark of the testament seen—Revival of true religion predicted—Present state of the Church affords room for it—The other results of this trumpet—Precise character of this era of prophecy as distinguished from the close of the time, times, and half a time.

“ And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come ; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them

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which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament : and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.”—Rev. xi. 15—19.

The period of the sounding of the seventh trumpet is one of the most interesting subjects of inquiry that can engage the attention of the present age, both from the important nature of its contents, and the high probability that its blast will shortly be heard. The opinion which has long prevailed among expositors, that the French Revolution in 1793 constituted that era, will probably be rejected by most persons at the present period. This hypothesis, supported as it is by the names of nearly every commentator of note since that period, manifestly proceeds upon a most imperfect acquaintance with the nature of the close of the twelve hundred and sixty days, and its results upon the Church and the world. At the close of the forty-two months, that is the twelve hundred and sixty days, the ten-horned Beast, the representative of Civil Tyranny in Europe, loses the power given him to effect his will (Rev. xiii. 5). At the same era the Church of Christ quits the wilderness (Rev. xii. 6), and the Holy City ceases to be trodden under foot (Rev. xi. 2). At the same era the second woe, or Mahometan delusion, ceases to hold possession of the Eastern world (Rev. xi. 14), and at this identical period, too, the Papal apostacy, or little horn of Daniel, loses its long-cherished dominion (Dan. vii. 25). Now, these conditions have never been fulfilled: not one of these results has yet occurred. No permanent improvement in the state of the Church, no lasting injury to the dominion of the Anti-Christian powers, has taken place. On the contrary, we have witnessed, during the last few years, a marked and extensive revival of Popery in Europe and America, and the rise and incredible spread of a similar system of doctrines

and practice in the Established Church of these realms. He must indeed be a bold man who, in the face of all which Britain has witnessed of late, would still maintain that the glorious era pointed out by the seventh trumpet transpired half a century ago.

Rejecting therefore a theory so contradictory to actual experience, it now remains to ascertain if possible the true date of this prophetic era. Although, then, the precise period of this important event is nowhere distinctly revealed, still it is possible to infer it with tolerable precision. The seventh trumpet sounds within a few years of the close of the great prophetic period of twelve hundred and sixty days. This is evident from the statement made at the ascension of the witnesses, which happens at that very period,—“*the second woe is past, behold the third woe [that is the seventh trumpet] cometh quickly,*”—an expression which can hardly signify more than a few years.

The close proximity of this trumpet to the end of the twelve hundred and sixty days is also evident from a chronological prophecy in the book of Daniel. Towards the close of the last chapter, that prophet is informed of an additional period of thirty years, beyond the twelve hundred and sixty years, which I shall afterwards have occasion to prove refers to the Battle of Armageddon. Now, the Battle of Armageddon occurs under the seventh vial (Rev. xvi. 16), and the whole of the vials are poured out under this last trumpet; hence the seventh angel must surely sound considerably within the thirty years specified, to allow of sufficient time for the effusion of the six first vials, all of which are poured out before the Battle of Armageddon commences.

From these remarks the period of the seventh trumpet may be fixed with as much precision as is necessary, or even desirable. The twelve hundred and sixty years are almost universally acknowledged to terminate about A.D. 1864 or 1866,

and this date derives confirmation from the remarkable fact, that the two thousand four hundred days (Sept.), the period assigned for the cleansing of the Sanctuary, reaches to the same period,—there being exactly two thousand four hundred years from the union of the Median and Persian kingdoms in the person of Cyrus (B.C. 536), which is clearly the commencement of the vision (Dan. viii. 3), to the year 1864. It is therefore in the highest degree probable (unless that system of prophetic interpretation which is almost universally adopted prove incorrect) that the seventh angel will sound his trumpet within a few years, that is to say, ten or at most twenty years from 1864 or 1866 A.D., the expected close of the time, times, and half a time. Then will great voices be heard in Heaven exclaiming with one accord,—“*The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.*”

Previous to the sounding of its terrific blast, we are expressly informed that it would bring misery upon mankind, or in other words, be pre-eminently a woe trumpet. After the four first Apocalyptic trumpets had sounded, and mankind had suffered under their calamitous effects, the Apostle says,—“*I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound!*” This evidently shews that a far heavier amount of woe would follow the remaining trumpets than had already followed the sounding of the first four; and immediately before the blast of the seventh trumpet is heard, it is again said,—“*The third woe cometh quickly.*”

It is very evident, then, from these considerations, that the most obvious and palpable feature of the seventh trumpet is its *judicial or retributive character*. Accordingly we find it stated in the song of the four and twenty elders,—“*Thy wrath is*

come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and to destroy them which destroy the earth." The accompanying signs too, clearly betoken *Divine vengeance* upon mankind,—*"And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."* Lastly : the fact of the seventh trumpet being pre-eminently one of woe, is still further proved from its containing the whole of the vials or last plagues, on which is filled up the wrath of God ; but as this opinion has been of late generally contradicted, the reader is referred for its proof to an ensuing chapter upon the vials.

When we consider the awful and tremendous nature of this third woe, it may appear strange that its arrival should be hailed with delight by the representatives of the redeemed in heaven. Nothing, however, can be more certain,—*"We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and reigned."* This apparent incongruity is, however, easily explained, if we reflect that the judgments which follow the seventh angel's blast are *exclusively* directed against the enemies of Christ, and constitute the necessary means of destroying the Anti-christian Powers, and of setting up the kingdom of the Son of Man. Hence it is that on the sounding of this last trumpet, the glorious inhabitants of Heaven lose sight of the calamitous nature of this woe in the fixed and rapturous contemplation of its mighty results,—*"And there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats fell upon their faces, and worshiped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come ; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned."*—Rev. xi. 15—17.

With reference to the exclamation uttered, as sublimely

stated, by "GREAT VOICES,"—"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ,"—its natural import would undoubtedly seem to be, that *now*, on the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the whole earth was at length subjected to the Messiah's sway. The Anti-christian Powers, both Ecclesiastical and Civil destroyed, and the glorious prophecy respecting the Messiah fulfilled:—"He shall reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." Such is accordingly the interpretation given of this passage by all the leading expositors of the Apocalypse.

A little reflection, however, will at once convince us, that the language of the seventh trumpet cannot bear this meaning, unless it be used merely by way of anticipation. The awful judgments which afterwards destroy the enemies of Christ, prove that as yet He had not triumphed over his foes, and the terrific and universal vengeance which is subsequently poured out on the world, from which the saints of God are sealed, establishes the fact that but a very small extent of territory was at this period held by Him who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The reading of Griesbach, however, suggests a different interpretation. Instead of being "*the kingdoms of this world*," it is "*the kingdom of the world is become our Lord's*," &c.,—that is, the sovereignty of the whole earth is taken from the devil, "*the Prince of this World*," and placed in the hands of Him, which is by right, "THE KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS,"—"He has taken to him his great power, and reigned." He has now assumed the rule of the earth, and though His kingdom so far from being come universally, and having reached its ultimate extent and glory, has only just commenced; although none of his enemies are yet subdued, and the corrupt dynasties and blasphemous hierarchies of Europe still subsist, yet the Almighty has begun to reign upon the earth, and will go on rapidly subjecting the whole

world to his sway, until "*The knowledge of Jehovah shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.*"

The correct view, then, of this declaration, "*The kingdom of the world is become our Lord's, and his Christ's, and he shall reign for ever and ever,*" appears to be that the kingdom of Christ was now at length set up (Dan. ii. 44). He had commenced his everlasting reign on earth. The power given to the ten-horned Beast, the representative of Civil Tyranny in Europe, to effect his will forty and two months (Rev. xiii. 5) had previously ceased. The dominion of the little-horn or Papacy over the saints, and times, and laws for a similar period had also *been taken away* (Dan. vii. 27.); and now at the sounding of the seventh trumpet, after an interval of only a few years, the God of Heaven assumes the absolute government of the earth,—"*The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.*"

This kingdom or reign of God thus commenced, involves clearly the exercise of Absolute and Almighty Power, for the accomplishment of the will of Infinite Love in our fallen world. At present we know this is not the case. "*His will is not done on earth as it is in Heaven.*" "*His kingdom is not come.*" The great dragon, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, reigns with undisputed authority over this world. "*He is the Spirit that now ruleth in the hearts of the children of disobedience,*" which, alas, is the character of all mankind, with few exceptions. As he declared to the Messiah in the days of his flesh,—"*The kingdoms of this world and the glory thereof are delivered unto him, and to whomsoever he will he giveth them.*" Accordingly it is said of the Roman Empire,—"*The dragon gave him his power, and seat, and great authority ;*" and he is elsewhere termed "*the prince of this world*" by Christ himself. Now, it is obvious, that such a state of things necessarily occasions that universal prevalence of ignorance, guilt, and misery in the world,

and that low ebb of piety in the Church of the living God, which the present age exhibits, and to it may probably be traced the almost total failure of Christianity in the earth, ever since the fifth or sixth century. But when the seventh trumpet sounds on high, the sovereignty of the world will revert to its rightful owner. Infinite Intelligence, and Almighty Love, will claim the absolute and undivided government of this earth. "*The kingdom of God will then be set up,*" and "*his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*"

Although, however, the kingdom or reign of God commences at this period, still if the state of the world at the period of this *transfer of government* be taken into account, it is quite evident, that the *first acts* of the new Sovereign, on returning to this rebellious province of his Empire, must be *punishment*; and, although judgment is "*the strange work*" of the God of Love, yet, whenever necessary, it would be *weakness* in the Lord of all, did he not punish rebels against his throne. Accordingly we find that the seventh trumpet which ushers in the kingdom of the Most High, is pre-eminently a trumpet of woe. The wrath of God, long, very long restrained, is at length poured out on a guilty world,—the cry of the "*souls under the altar of them who were slain for the word of God,*" for vengeance is at last answered. The monstrous systems of Civil and Spiritual Despotism,—the two grand machines of Satan for enslaving and destroying the earth,—will by the vials of divine wrath for ever be annihilated, and every enemy to God and man swept from the face of the earth. Hence the most conspicuous contents of the seventh trumpet are WRATH, VENGEANCE, and DESTRUCTION:—" *We give thee thanks, O Lord God almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry,*

and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.”—Rev. xi. 17, 18.

We have thus noticed the leading character of the great prophetic era denoted by the sounding of the seventh trumpet, let us now proceed to consider the remaining results. These are contained in the verse which follows the song of the twenty-four elders,—“*And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament; and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*”—Rev. xi. 19.

“*The temple of God in Heaven,*” denotes that place in the Heavenly world, where Jehovah, in an especial sense, takes up his abode; there he sits enthroned, manifests his glory, and receives the worship of the celestial hosts.

On examining the book of the Revelation, it will be found that this mysterious and sacred place is only mentioned *after the sounding of the seventh trumpet*. Whilst the seals are being successively opened, and their sublime and awful contents disclosed to the eye of the beloved Apostle, and whilst the six first trumpets sound their notes of alarm, we read nothing of “*The temple of God in Heaven.*” It is the scene of none of those grand events of which that part of the Apocalypse treats,—no voice is heard to proceed in superhuman tones from that dwelling-place of the Almighty,—no angelic or redeemed creature is beheld entering or leaving its stupendous portal. During the whole of this period it remains closed, and it has no medium of connexion with this lower world. But on the blast of the seventh trumpet being heard echoing throughout the vaults of Heaven,—“*The temple of God is opened,*” and from this period it forms a conspicuous part of the scenery of the Apocalypse, being

mentioned no less than ten times ; and hence we are provided with a rule which will hold good throughout this mysterious book, that, wherever the temple of God in Heaven appears upon the scene, the prophecy in which it is mentioned receives its accomplishment subsequent to the sounding of the seventh trumpet, when the sovereignty of the earth has been transferred from the Prince of this World to the Prince of Peace.

To proceed with the investigation of the prediction : the temple of God denotes, as just observed, that place where the Almighty visibly and peculiarly dwells seated on a throne of dazzling light, where he condescends to display his glory, and hold intercourse with finite creatures, receiving the homage of their praise, and employing them to execute his will (Isaiah vi.)

The opening of the temple of God in Heaven, therefore, clearly signifies that this earth was now again exposed to the immediate influence of the blessed God, and that mankind were once more brought into direct connection with the presence and glory of its Creator. Not that this or any part of the material universe was ever absolutely cut off from the influence and control of the Governor of all things ; but that up to this period, the world had been almost wholly abandoned to the rule of "*the Prince of this World,*" and his confederates. The immediate and effectual presence of God had been withdrawn. The divine glory had not been manifested in reference to our guilty race, except in partial and isolated instances. Now, however, that the temple of God was opened, the Almighty would as it were come down to this lower world,—the glories of his character be brought to bear upon this rebellious province of his empire, in short, the symbol bears a striking analogy to the declaration uttered by great voices at the opening of this trumpet,—"*The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.*"

The opening of the temple of God in Heaven, leads to the exposure of the ark of the Testament to the vision of men,—“*And there was seen in his temple the ark of His Testament.*” Under the Jewish economy, it is well known, the ark of the Testament constituted the most sacred of all the contents of the temple. It was deposited within the Holy of Holies ;—it was beheld only by the Priest, and by him only once in a year, on the great day of atonement, when the doctrine of vicarious suffering was publicly declared to the Jews. When, therefore, we read that one of the great results of the seventh trumpet’s blast, will be the vision of the ark of the Testament in the temple of God, it clearly imports that the great truths of religion,—spiritual things, would at this period, be clearly perceived by his people on earth. That professors of the Gospel would be generally distinguished by a vigorous comprehension of divine truth. The faith of the Gospel would become a mighty and efficacious principle of action, instead of a mere speculative profession that exercises no influence on the life. The mind of the believer would penetrate “*within the veil,*” and see with a clearness and vigour resembling the perceptions of sense, the great principles as well as the higher mysteries of the oracles of God. And how beautifully expressive is the figure by which this glorious truth is taught, the ark of the covenant, the depository, both of the divine will, and of the symbols of his mighty works, is brought forth from behind the veil, and seen—*publicly, openly seen in His Temple !*

There exists therefore the strongest reasons to believe that on the sound of the seventh trumpet, a general and lasting revival of religion will take place in the Church of Christ. It does not refer to an extension of the Redeemer’s cause, so much as to a mighty increase in the power of godliness where it already exists, although it may include both. And oh ! how cheering is this prospect to the people of God, and espe-

cially to the faithful Ministers of Christ! How consoling, amid the difficulties, discouragements, and unfruitfulness of the Christian ministry in the present day, is the assurance thus afforded, that within probably about thirty years, a universal, and mighty, and permanent revival of godliness will commence amongst the followers of the Lamb! How much, alas! does the present state of the visible Church require it! Like that of Laodicea of old, she says,—“*I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, and knoweth not that she is wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*” How cold and powerless is the faith of Christians in the present age! To what an extent are professors engrossed with the affairs of time! How fearfully does “*covetousness which is idolatry,*” and worldliness and self-indulgence, reign in the Christian’s heart! And how numerous are the instances in which even the shepherds of the flock are equally culpable! How little of apostolic simplicity, and holiness, and self-devotion is observable! Oh, how consolatory to those who view with grief this state of the visible Church, to look forward with confident faith to a period, fast approaching, when the veil of spiritual darkness and carnality will be removed from the professor’s heart, and “*the ark of the covenant* [the depository of God’s will to man] *SEEN in His temple!*”

The only remaining result stated in the very brief account of the sounding of the seventh trumpet is the manifestation of divine wrath against the Anti-Christian powers,—“*And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*” On referring to the account of the effusion of the seventh vial, it will be found that these very same symbols again occur, and as that vial is by all expositors placed under this trumpet, it is manifest that the same identical events are denoted in both instances. There are, it is true, some trifling variations in the two

descriptions ; but this arises from the latter being a more full and particular account, whereas the former is simply a brief outline. On this ground it will obviously be better to defer the consideration of these signs until the seventh vial comes under our notice.

I shall close the chapter with a brief remark or two on the precise character of this era of prophecy, as distinguished from that which we have seen so closely precedes it, viz :—the end of the great period of twelve hundred and sixty days, or forty two months, or time, times, and half a time.* The former era was simply a removal of that dominion which the Anti-christian powers had for upwards of twelve hundred years enjoyed, and the events necessarily arising out of this, such as the ascension of the two witnesses to heaven (Rev. xi. 12), and the emerging of the woman or true Church from the wilderness (Rev. xii. 14). This, on the other hand, is the *positive assumption* of supreme dominion by the Almighty himself some years after the two apocalyptic Beasts had lost their power, for the welfare of his people, the universal diffusion of the gospel, the utter and speedy destruction of the Anti-christian powers:—“*And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come ; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.*”—Rev. xi. 15—17. Now, nothing can be clearer, than that the end of the twelve hundred and sixty days, though a glorious

* For a full enquiry into the period and results of this previous era, the reader is referred to the 2nd Part of the author's work on the “Downfall of Popery.”—Ward, London.

epoch, does not involve anything amounting to this. It is true that era marks the deliverance of the Church of Christ from her Anti-Christian foes, as well as the termination of the prophesying of the two witnesses, or Old and New Testaments, in sackcloth, during which heaven is shut that it rain not, and the influence of the Spirit is sparingly imparted to man. But still this is all. Here the glorious revolution stops,—the kingdom of God does not commence on earth,—the Almighty does not “*take unto him his great power, and reign,*”—the seven vials of divine wrath are not poured out upon the enemies of Christ; but a sort of neutral state succeeds, to be “*quickly*” broken by the sound of the seventh trumpet and of great voices on high, exclaiming,—“*The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.*”—Rev. xi. 15.

CHAPTER II.

THE EFFUSION OF THE SEVEN VIALS.

The last days derive their perilous character from the vials—Period of their effusion a subject of dispute—Arguments to prove none of the vials are poured out until the seventh trumpet—Remarkable analogy between the trumpets and the vials—The whole of the vials directed against the Anti-christian and corrupt part of mankind—Contents of the first vial—Incorrectly interpreted by Faber and others—Import of the second vial—Incorrectly applied to the slaughter of mankind during the French Revolution—Remarkable peculiarity in the third vial—Import of this vial—Its interpretation by Keith and others untenable—Import of the fourth vial—Its application to the Emperor Buonaparte unjust—Its probable fulfilment—Import of the fifth vial—Inconsistent interpretation by Keith—Illustration of this vial from Daniel—Import of the sixth vial—Mistake of expositors in considering the drying up of the Euphrates a work of time—Probable reference of a passage in Daniel to this vial—Kings of the East, the way prepared for them—Theory of a recent work on this subject—The unclean spirits which gather the kings of the earth to Armageddon—Their adaptation to the work—Final warning of the Saviour to his people—Import of the seventh vial—The great city—Its division into three parts—The great hail—General remarks on the vials.

The period denominated in various parts of Scripture, "*the last days*," "*the time of the end*," "*the latter days*," &c., derives its perilous character, principally from the fact, that the "*seven golden vials full of the wrath of God*" are then poured out in quick succession on the enemies of God. With them begins, and with them terminates the overthrow of the Anti-christian powers in Church and State, the subversion of the kingdom of Satan, and the "*destruction of all them who corrupt the earth*." They are the "*seven last*

plagues, in which is filled up the wrath of God," and therefore no subsequent infliction of divine vengeance upon mankind can possibly occur, until the glorious period signified by the millenium has passed away, and Gog and Magog once more attack the "*beloved city,*" and "*fire from God out of Heaven destroy them.*"

Before proceeding to consider the awful contents of the vials of divine wrath, it is necessary to premise, that the true place of the vials has long been a subject of dispute. One class of expositors contending that the six first vials are poured out previous to the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and the last vial after that epoch. The other class maintaining that, as the last seal contains the seven trumpets, so does the last trumpet the seven vials. Modern expositors have almost unanimously contended for the former opinion, and explained the grand events of the French Revolution as the fulfilment of the five first vials, and the present weak and depopulated state of Turkey as the accomplishment of the sixth. On this subject, however, I cannot concur with those able and learned men, for the following reasons:—

1st. It appears to me indubitable, that none of the vials have yet been fulfilled; because the exact correspondence in number between the seals, trumpets, and vials, leads me to believe, that the seventh trumpet, just as the seventh seal, diverges into the vials of wrath which are subsequently mentioned. On the opening of the last seal, we read,—"*Seven angels stood before God, and to them were given seven trumpets;*" and then follows the sublime account of their terrific blasts being sounded. This is, I cannot but consider, the precise relation of the seven vials to the last trumpet. It is true, the account of their effusion does not immediately follow the sounding of the seventh trumpet (and this, I doubt not, has occasioned all the difficulty and controversy on the subject); but this is by no means a necessary thing, nor can it set

aside the numerous reasons which may be alleged in favour of the opinion now referred to.

2nd. The character of the seven vials accords so closely with that of the seventh trumpet, that it is at least highly probable, in the absence of any actual proof to the contrary, that they belong to it. They are termed, "*golden vials full of the wrath of God who liveth for ever,*" and in another place, "*the seven last plagues;*" and it is also evident that the objects against which these plagues are directed, are the adherents of the Beast and the false prophet. On referring to the character of the seventh trumpet, it will be found that its contents are precisely similar,—"*Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead for judgment to take place,*" (κριθῆναι), i. e., inflict vengeance upon the persecutors of the saints and martyrs; so that the character of the vials exactly agrees with that of this epoch. In the account of the third vial in particular, it is expressly said,—"*Thou art righteous, O Lord, because thou hast thus judged, for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.*"

3rd. The opinion that the vials have been pouring out for several years past, is totally irreconcilable with the fact, that the twelve hundred and sixty days are yet unfinished. It is well known that power was granted to the ten-horned Beast, on his ascent out of the sea, to prosper forty and two months (Rev. xiii.), and of the Papal horn it is also said "*The saints shall be delivered into his hands for a time, times, and half a time.*"—(Dan. vii. 25.) Hence it is a gross inconsistency to suppose that any of the seven vials, full of the wrath of God, can be poured out on those guilty systems of Despotism before they have run their appointed career of prosperity. And although many commentators have in past years thought the Papacy received its death-wound at

the French Revolution, yet I apprehend no one who is acquainted with the recent spread of Catholicism and Puseyism throughout the world, will hazard such an assertion at present. The inconsistency therefore which attaches to the opinion that the dreadful judgments, indicated by the seven vials, are inflicted on the Anti-Christian powers many years previous to the expiration of their appointed period of power and prosperity, loudly calls upon us to discard it.

4th. The rule that whenever the Temple of God is spoken of, and constitutes a part of the scenery of the Apocalypse, the events referred to receive their accomplishment subsequent to the sounding of the seventh trumpet, is another reason why none of the vials can be poured out previous to the seventh trumpet. In the sublime scene which introduces the pouring out of the seven last plagues the Temple of God is mentioned several times, and particular notice taken of the fact of its having been opened (Rev. xv. 5). It is therefore evident, if the above rule be just, the whole of the vials are poured out subsequently to the blast of the seventh trumpet. In the words of an old writer, "After the seventh trumpet sounds (Rev. xi. 15), and a brief summary is given of the events contained in it, in the three following verses it is said (verse 19), '*I saw the Tabernacle of God in heaven opened.*' This expression I consider as a mark, inserted like the loop on the edge of the curtain, where the series of the narration is broken off. Accordingly the same words are repeated (Rev. xv. 6), like the connecting loop on the edge of the other curtain. Then it is said, '*And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.*'"

5th. The impossibility of finding any events in the past history of the world that can fairly be regarded as accomplishing the awful predictions contained in the six first vials,

is the last argument which I shall notice in support of the present position. The application of the vials to the dreadful events of the French Revolution, in which so many eminent expositors of prophecy agree, appears to be founded in a very erroneous interpretation of the symbols which describe those judgments. But as each of those interpretations will be immediately considered in treating of the import of the vials, it is unnecessary to forestal those remarks here.

The judgments predicted under the image of the effusion of the golden vials filled with the wrath of God are, from their awful character, as well as their near approach, entitled to the especial attention of every believer in revelation. I shall just premise a few remarks as to their general character, and then proceed to consider each separately, comparing at the same time the interpretation of those expositors who regard them as already accomplished, in order that the respective merits of the two conflicting systems may be impartially weighed by the reader.

It can hardly escape the observation of the attentive reader, that there subsists a striking analogy between the trumpets and the corresponding vials. The objects against which the latter are directed are almost in every instance the same as in the former, and the effects ensuing are also similar. The first trumpet affects the earth ; so does the first vial. The second trumpet affects the sea, and it becomes blood ; the second vial is poured on the sea, and the same effect follows. The third trumpet influences the fountains and springs ; so does the third vial, and in both cases the consequence is death. The fourth trumpet affects the sun and heavenly bodies, and their light is eclipsed ; the fourth vial is poured on the sun, and its heat is increased so as to scorch mankind. Similarly, the fifth trumpet occasions infernal darkness to obscure the sun and the air, and the corresponding vial afflicts the kingdom of the Beast with darkness. Lastly, the sixth

trumpet occasions some power "*bound in the great river Euphrates, to conquer and slay the third part of men;*" to which the sixth trumpet bears a wonderful analogy, in describing the destruction of this identical power,—"*the water of the great river Euphrates was dried up.*"

Another remark I wish to make is, that the whole of the vials being inflictions of divine wrath upon the adherents and supporters of the two great systems of Despotism in Church and State, denominated the ten-horned beast of the sea, and the two-horned Beast of the earth, they cannot involve the true servants of God. This is plain both from the express character of the seventh trumpet (which contains, as we have seen, all the vials), which is to give reward unto his servants, (Rev. xi. 18), and also from the objects against which we are informed most of these judgments are directed being the subjects or kingdom of the Beast. The analogy too which has been often pointed out between the plagues of Egypt and the seven vials, affords another argument for the safety or exemption of the redeemed from the coming inflictions of divine wrath. The plagues of Egypt, it is well known, were directed against the oppressors of God's ancient people, who were miraculously preserved in perfect safety, whilst plague and pestilence and death raged on every hand around them. The remarkable similarity of the language of these two series of judgments proves, I conceive, that a striking analogy subsists between them; and hence there can be little doubt that faith in the blood of the Lamb will exercise that same efficacy in preserving Christians from the seven last plagues, just as the sprinkled blood of the passover warned the destroying angel to pass by the door of the Israelite in that fearful night when, from the king on the throne down to the very beggar, "*the first-born of Egypt was slain.*"

"*And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the*

men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image."—(Rev. xvi. 2.) As already observed, the first vial, like the first trumpet, affects the earth, by which appears to be meant the more cultivated and civilised portion of the world, as opposed to those parts which remain barbarous and waste, like the sea itself. The particular kind of judgment denoted, it is difficult, or perhaps impossible, to foretell from the very brief and indefinite account of it here given. It is, however, easy to say what is the general character of the evil inflicted. It evidently involves the whole body of the subjects of the Beast's kingdom,—that is, the ten-horned Wild Beast described in the 13th chapter as constituting the ten European kingdoms of the present day. The first trumpet, on the sounding of which "*there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up,*" seems plainly to denote the dreadful persecutions which the whole Christian Church experienced under the Pagan Emperors of Rome; for green grass is evidently the symbol of the servants of Christ (Rev. ix. 4). Similarly the first vial visits with retribution the whole body of the first Beast, or Western Empire, by occasioning a noisome or grievous sore to overspread their bodies.

This sore is evidently a figurative or moral sore, for the whole of the Apocalypse is written in that style, and probably signifies some cause or source of mental and moral torment, produced by some change in the state of society: the condition and circumstances of the Anti-Christian body throughout Europe experience some alteration at this period (through the occurrence, it is to be supposed, of some recent event) which occasions constantly emotions of disgrace and torment. It does not imply that the Anti-Christian part of mankind at this time become more wicked and vile than they always were, but the inherent corruptions of the heart (like

the corrupt humours of the body) are by some sudden occurrence caused to break out and assume the form of spiritual sores, grievous and noisome,—fixed, constant, and remediless sources of mental disgrace and suffering to the miserable objects of divine wrath, clinging to them in every occupation and situation of life.

The interpretation of Faber, adopted also by Cunningham Gauntlett and others, that this sore signifies the delusive spirit of atheism which marked the earlier stage of the French Revolution, appears to me very unfortunate. A sore denotes the effects of inward principles, but certainly not the principles themselves; and the retributive character which so plainly belongs to this vial, as well as all the others, is quite lost sight of here. The loose and indefinite illustration of Keith makes it difficult to know what particular judgment accomplished this vial; but the circumstance of his confining its effects to the single country of France is sufficient to render some other explanation requisite.

“*And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.*”—(Rev. xvi. 3.) The import of this vial, like that of the second trumpet, is so plain that it can hardly be mistaken. The symbols are of such obvious signification, and the effects produced so easily comprehended, that it is certainly a matter of surprise that commentators should at all differ in its interpretation. This vial is poured on the sea, which is often used in the prophetical writings to signify immense multitudes of people,—(Rev. xvii. 15.) “*The waters which thou sawest are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.*” And their becoming blood so clearly denotes the general slaughter of those “*peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues,*” that it is quite superfluous to attempt the proof of it. The very same effects are said to follow the sounding of the second trumpet, which was unquestionably

fulfilled, I consider, in the irruption of the barbarous nations of the north into the Roman empire (*"a great mountain on fire cast into the sea"*), and the unparalleled devastation and carnage which was for centuries produced. There is consequently the strongest reason to expect the fulfilment of this vial in a dreadful slaughter of the nations upon which the whore is sealed (Rev. xvii. 15), by means of either civil or foreign warfare; and the dreadful ravages and slaughter occasioned by the invasions of Attila, king of the Huns, Genserich, king of the Vandals, and Alaric, king of the Goths, during the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, will afford us the best idea of the horrors and extent of this yet future desolation.

The application of this vial, by almost every modern expositor of prophecy, to the effusion of blood during the French Revolution, though founded upon a just understanding of the symbols, still appears to me defective in one particular, that of the extent of the judgment referred to. If the second trumpet, which affects the third part of the sea, had its fulfilment in the universal desolation and repeated slaughters of the Roman empire, during the irruptions of the barbarians of the north, surely something still more extensive is denoted by the vial which affects the whole sea, and causes *"every living soul to die therein."* It is therefore necessary to wait until some still more dreadful and desolating invasions, civil wars, and bloody massacres occur in doomed Europe.

"And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard

another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments."—(Rev. xvi. 4-7.)

This vial differs in one remarkable particular from all the rest, in the interposition of angelic beings to assert and defend the righteousness and justice of the Almighty in the manifestation of divine wrath:—"And I heard the angel of the waters say, *Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.*" This repeated vindication of the justice of God in the third plague seems to denote, that there was something in the nature of the judgment apparently at variance with that attribute of Deity; for otherwise there is no assignable reason why this vial alone should thus be distinguished from the others. It certainly does not exceed the other "*last plagues*" in intensity nor in the extent of its influence. "*Rivers and fountains of waters*" cannot denote any objects of equal magnitude with "*the sea*" itself; and their becoming blood of course denotes the same thing as in the case of the sea. It appears difficult therefore to conceive, as there appears no cause to regard this vial as a *greater* judgment than the others, why it should be necessary to vindicate the righteousness of God on this display of his wrath, whilst nothing of the kind takes place in connection with the others, except on the supposition that it was calculated to produce the opposite emotions in the minds of spectators; that, in other words, it would appear so unjust, so cruel, so unrighteous an act, that it would be deemed necessary thus to assert and maintain its perfect justice, its harmony with the righteousness of the God of all, by a reference to the fact that the objects of this judgment had inflicted a

similar vengeance on the servants of God :—“ *For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink ; for they are worthy.*”

To proceed with the interpretation of this vial. As the “ *rivers and fountains of waters becoming bitter*” under the third trumpet, signified that the doctrines of religion had become imbued with destructive corruptions and fatal errors,—so here those same symbols becoming *blood* appear to signify, that at the period referred to, the doctrines promulgated by the Anti-christian clergy, would become to those who received them *the means of destruction*. It is thus the angel of the waters afterwards explains it :—“ *Thou hast given them blood to drink ;*” that is, *the fountains of waters and rivers having become blood*, they who hold or receive those doctrines, do hereby drink, as it were, destruction to themselves. Either by some kind of change in the opinions and doctrines of the Papacy, or else by means of some change in the feelings of mankind towards the Anti-christian part of mankind, a dreadful slaughter of the clergy and supporters of Ecclesiastical Despotism and Superstition takes place :—“ *The rivers and fountains of waters become blood.*”

As this dreadful calamity will occur as a visitation of the Divine Being, it cannot be thought strange that it should be charged upon the Almighty as an act of injustice ; it is not the ravages and destruction which follow in the train of war, where all classes are alike exposed to, and alike suffer, misery and death, or like the general desolation of pestilence or famine ; but it is the massacre of one particular class, or order of men, and it is thus that carnal men will be led to exclaim against what they consider the divine injustice and cruelty ; whilst to the spiritual and faithful, the voice of the angel of the waters will be heard alleging the conduct of their fathers as the cause of this visitation of divine wrath, and that of the angel out of the altar joining

in this vindication of the righteousness of God,—“*Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.*”—Rev. xvi. 7.

“*And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun ; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues : and they repented not to give him glory.*”—Rev. xvi. 8, 9.

The sun may in this passage mean either simply the chief potentate of Europe, or the kingly powers in general. This vial then signifies, I apprehend, the exact opposite of the fourth trumpet. The increased exercise of tyrannical power in the kingdoms of Europe,—that governing power which in moderation and justice is beneficial to man, like the light and heat of the sun, being greatly increased, is changed into a curse, and burns instead of cheering and benefiting the earth. This is the interpretation which has uniformly been given to this vial, the symbol and action being so easy and plain.

The application of this vial to the military despotism of Buonaparte, by Keith and others, appears to me certainly defective. The despotic tyranny of that usurper was principally displayed in the destruction of his subjects by repeated and bloody wars, instead of by scorching heat ; and we in vain look for that order in the succession of plagues, which the effusion of the vials plainly exhibits, in the events of the French Revolution usually alleged as their fulfilment. Without attempting to discover the precise nature of this woe, it is enough to say, that it clearly points out some dreadful exercise of tyranny upon the subjects of the Beast's kingdom by the ruling powers. It does not kill, but it scorches, inflicts suffering of some kind, destroys men's substance perhaps, withers their hopes and comforts, produces extreme torment and pain, under the continued effects

of which they "*blaspheme the name of God which hath power over these plagues, and they repented not to give him glory.*"

"*And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast ; and his kingdom was full of darkness ; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.*"—Rev. xvi. 10, 11.

The seat, or as the word is more correctly rendered Rev. xiii. 1, throne (*θρονος*), denotes probably the head quarters of the government of the ten-horned Beast, the metropolis of the sovereign who will at this period constitute the head of the Secular Wild Beast, or Western Empire. At present there is no potentate who holds that relation,—the Emperor of Austria having abdicated the title of Emperor of Rome ; but there is evidently nothing to prevent its being again assumed.

The effect of this vial when poured upon the throne of the ten-horned Beast is, "*to fill his kingdom with darkness,*" upon which it is said, "*they gnawed their tongues for pain.*" Darkness is the evident symbol of perplexity, disappointment, and trouble. Some dreadful blow, therefore, to the Civil Despotism of the west, which shall produce these results in the adherents of the Beast, is plainly denoted by this vial ; but it is impossible from the conciseness of the language to discover in what it will consist. With the grossest inconsistency, Keith interprets this vial as having received its accomplishment in the spread of the doctrines of Popery on the Continent after the downfall of Buonaparte, as though the revival of the influence of the Whore which is carried by the Beast, should constitute such a woe that would fill his kingdom with darkness, and occasion its adherents to "*gnaw their tongues for pain.*" But such deplorable mistakes can hardly fail to happen, when a commentator

is bent upon making events square with a preconceived hypothesis. Had he and other writers never adopted the theory, that the sixth vial was already poured out, or on the eve of being, and that therefore all that precede it necessarily must have been accomplished, this, and similar errors would never have occurred.

There is a passage in Daniel's last prophecy, "*of the things noted in the scriptures of truth,*" which, from its chronology as well as from the nature of events which it predicts, appears unquestionably identical with the fifth vial. The passage occurs in chapter xi. 40, 41 verses:—"And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon."

"The time of the end" (עַתָּת קֵץ), throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, is employed as synonymous with the latter days (קֵץ הַיָּמִים), (*Ges. in voc.* קֵץ). The signification of that phrase, therefore, clearly is the end of the twelve hundred and sixty days, or reign of the Papal See, which we have already found is the period of effusion of the vials. Accordingly a few verses onwards after relating the wars of the kings of the south and north, which would probably occupy some years, the prophet mentions the great tribulation (Dan. xii. 1), which I shall presently shew occurs under the seventh vial.

The period, then, of the attack of the kings of the south and north upon the "*king who did according to his will,*" is clearly the same as that of the vials; and, if so, the violence with which the northern potentate invades the kingdom of

the Roman Pontiff, renders it in the highest degree probable, that some one or other of those vials which are the adherents of the Papacy, must be considered as identical with this attack :—" *The king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships ; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.*" The invader evidently sweeps through the territory of the "*king who did according to his will,*" bearing down all opposition, and occasioning all the horrors and desolation which follow in the footsteps of war. If, therefore, the seat of the Beast, mentioned in the fifth vial, denote, as there is strong reason to think, the city of Rome, then the effusion of that vial which fills his kingdom with darkness, is identical with this invasion of the Papal See by the northern sovereign.

" *And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates ; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.*" —Rev. xvi. 12—16.

The great river Euphrates, is the well-known symbol of the kingdom through which its waters roll. The Turkish power had been previously brought before us, under this designation, in the sixth trumpet, and the same analogy is observable here, as in the previous vials. The sixth trumpet "*loosed the four angels bound in the Euphrates,*" and

myriads of Turkish horsemen overwhelmed and destroyed the Eastern empire. The corresponding vial affects the same object; but its consequences are the exact reverse. The waters are dried up,—the kingdom is desolated.

In interpreting the consequences which are said to follow the effusion of this vial on the Turkish empire, the commentators are almost universally agreed. Waters are the acknowledged symbol of multitudes of people, according to the interpretation of the angel,—“*The waters which thou sawest, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.*”—Rev. xvii. 15. The evaporation of the waters of the great river Euphrates, therefore, symbolizes the depopulation of the Turkish territory.

Whilst thus agreeing in the interpretation given of this vial by the generality of commentators, as to its leading features, I am compelled to differ from them, in regarding the drying up of the waters as a rapid act, rather than a work of time. The latter opinion owes its origin, doubtless, to the fact, that Turkey has for years past experienced a considerable diminution of its inhabitants, by means of plagues of divers sorts, in connection with the theory, that the previous five vials had been poured out already. The arguments already adduced in support of the opinion, that none of the vials have been poured out, if conclusive, are of course fatal to such a notion; but independently of this, the great length of time which has elapsed, according to the statements of this class of writers, appears to me an unanswerable proof of its unsoundness. Faber, who wrote in 1806, described the vial as having been then some years in operation. Hence fifty years have nearly elapsed, without any evidence arising, that the actual drying up,—the complete evaporation of the waters, is nearer at hand than at first. This is certainly in opposition to the obvious meaning of the prophecy, which represents the effect as immediately following the vial's effusion:—“*The*

sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up." Here is no pause, no long process,—the effect is produced at once, "*the water was dried up.*" The conclusion to which we are led, therefore, is that the prophecy is yet unfulfilled, and that when the vial is poured out, it will consist *not* in the death of ten, or twenty, or even fifty thousand men, at various intervals of time, but in a general and rapid depopulation of the whole Ottoman Empire. Some heavy judgment of the Almighty, *what* it is impossible to foresee, will dry up the channels of the figurative Euphrates, and Turkey as a nation will then cease to exist.

The prophecy of Daniel already quoted, contains what I cannot help regarding a most important illustration of this sixth vial. The verses immediately following those which refer to the judgment contained in the fifth vial, appear to me, descriptive of a dreadful destruction of the Turkish nation. The passage is the following:—" *But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.*"—Dan. xi. 43, 44. The import of this prophetic relation, seems to be, that during the successful invasion of Egypt, the northern potentate hears tidings out of the east and out of the north which trouble him; he goes forth, influenced by violent anger at the intelligence, "*to destroy, and utterly make away many,*" Whither does he go? It would appear to the east; for thence comes one portion of the intelligence, and he is described almost immediately after, as pitching his palace-like tents in Judea; if so, he goes there "*to destroy, and utterly make away many;*" that is to say, he goes forth to the east, from whence intelligence which troubles him has

arrived ; and as Turkey is one of the most contiguous countries in the east, it must be regarded, at least as highly probable, especially as a tremendous desolation of this kingdom does occur about this time, that "*he goes forth with great fury*" to Turkey, "*to destroy, and utterly make away many.*"

Although, then, it is far from certain, yet there does seem strong ground to conclude, that the destruction here predicted, is the same as that symbolized by the drying up of the waters of the Euphrates. The interpretation proceeds upon the supposition, that the exterminating invasion of Turkey by the northern king, occurs between the mention of his going forth with great fury and his planting his tents in Palestine, which latter event, unquestionably refers to the battle of Armageddon, as appears from the commencement of the twelfth chapter.

The object contemplated by the Omnipotent in this tremendous desolation is stated in the ensuing words :— "*That the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.*" This passage has proved a "*locus vexatissimus*" to every succeeding commentator, nor has any satisfactory explanation as yet been suggested. The prevalent opinion on the subject appears to be, that the "*kings of the east*" signify the Jews, and the way prepared for them, is their return to the land of their fathers. This theory, however, is utterly untenable. The term "*kings*" is employed just after, to denote actual, literal sovereigns ("*the kings of the earth,*" &c.) ; we cannot, therefore, understand it figuratively here ; by the laws of interpretation it is necessary to consider the same word as denoting the same thing where it occurs in such close connexion. Another objection equally fatal to such a notion is, that the restoration of the Jews must have *already taken place*, and therefore "*the way of the kings of the east*" cannot refer to that event. This is evident from the fact, that

at the same time that this "*way is prepared, the three unclean spirits go forth to gather the kings of the earth and the whole world to the Battle of Armageddon,*" which will be shewn, in the fifth chapter, to denote a conflict undertaken to recover Jerusalem from the Jews. Hence the restoration of the Jews to Palestine must have taken place already, instead of being *prepared* by the drying up of the Euphrates.

A recent work, entitled "*KINGS OF THE EAST,*" attempts at great length to establish an entirely novel opinion on this subject, viz., that the expression denotes the British nation as the conquerors and sovereigns of the vast peninsula of India, and that the way prepared for them, is to enable them to assist in restoring God's ancient people to the land of their fathers. It is obvious, however, that the last named objection, lies equally against this theory, viz., that it represents preparation being made for an event which must have transpired previously. The hypothesis, therefore, must be considered unfounded.

In the place of these and other opinions, I venture to suggest, that the kings of the east denote literal sovereigns, and that the expression, instead of bearing a mystical meaning, simply refers to the potentates exercising sway over the various kingdoms of the Eastern world; and further, that the way which is prepared for them, is nothing more than that same way along which "*the kings of the whole world*" are said to be gathered immediately after:—"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."—Rev. xvi. 13, 14. It is certain that kings of the east are included amongst the kings who engage at Armageddon; and therefore, unless any objection exist

against it, the plainest and most obvious interpretation which the language is capable of bearing, appears to be, that the destruction of the Ottoman power is occasioned by the sixth vial, in order that it should offer no impediment to the expedition of the kings of the earth being joined by the sovereigns of the east.

“ And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”—Rev. xvi. 13, 14.

“ The unclean spirits of devils,” here referred to, appear to signify, so many principles of action, adapted to instigate the kings of the world to that tremendous and fatal conflict :—that from the mouth of the dragon, probably will be Infidelity,—that from the mouth of the beast, worldliness,—that from the mouth of the false prophet, superstition. It is difficult to conceive of spirits issuing from the mouths of these enemies of God and his cause as denoting any thing else than principles of action, promulgated by the agency and influence of devils ; and their being called *“ spirits of devils working miracles,”* either intimates the extraordinary influence of the great Adversary, and his confederates, in diffusing these principles, and perhaps working miracles with that view, or simply the devilish character of such sentiments. The circumstance of their being compared to frogs, seems to intimate the spiritual impurity which belongs to them.

The above appears to me to be the natural import of this sixth vial ; and if the interpretation I have thus ventured to suggest be founded in truth, it is evident that there must be a manifest adaptation observable between the character of these spirits and the work they are commissioned to perform.

This fitness is accordingly most palpable in the theory just propounded. Infidelity,—a disbelief in the revealed will of God, must naturally tend to dispose men towards such an act of hostility against the purpose of the Most High, as the attempt to dispossess the Jews from their land. Similarly, the worldliness which proceeds from the mouth of the Wild Beast, evidently constitutes the grand motive to the attack (Ezekiel xxxviii. 12), and the fierce and long-continued enmity, induced by the Romish superstition against the “*unbelieving Jews*,” is too well known to require proof; so that the active promulgation of these principles, in the courts of monarchs, backed probably by Satanic wonders, would eminently tend to accomplish the object proposed by the infernal agents in this work, that of “*gathering together the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*”

“*Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*”—Rev. xvi. 15. This intimation of the Lord Jesus to his people of his approaching advent, clearly refers to that impending mighty judgment upon mankind, which is elsewhere also styled the coming of the Son of Man (Matt. xxiv. 30). As the whole of the seventh chapter of this book, however, is devoted to the investigation of this subject, I shall only remark here, that the sudden character of this visitation, so plainly taught, should operate as a powerful motive to constant watchfulness on the followers of the Son of God:—“*Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.*”

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."—Matt. xxv. 1—5, 13.

"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air ; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings ; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell : and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent : and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail ; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."—Rev. xvi. 17—21.

The seventh and last vial is poured out into the air, signifying that it was not an instrument of wrath and destruction to any one class of men, but would affect that element which extends through all nature, and is in immediate contact with every part of the visible world ; by this means it would produce the desired object upon the whole of society, and at once complete the destruction of those enemies of God, which the previous vials had only partially accomplished :—" *The day*" has at length "*come that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud and them that do wickedness shall be as stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, and it shall leave them neither root nor branch.*"

A great voice hereupon is heard "*out of the temple of God in heaven, from the throne,*" exclaiming, "*IT IS DONE.*" The oath of that mighty angel whose glorious appearance is described, Rev. x. 1, is now at length performed,—"*In*

the days of the voice of the seventh angel the mystery of God shall be finished." Accordingly this vial puts the finishing stroke to the destruction of Civil and Spiritual Despotism, annihilates every enemy, both spiritual and temporal, to man upon the earth, and closes that mysterious dispensation of the Almighty, during which He has allowed the Adversary apparently to frustrate His plans.

"And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great."—Rev xvi. 18. These signs of commotion and judgment, immediately before the great earthquake, identifying this vial with the latter part of the seventh trumpet, can hardly be interpreted separately. They probably consist of a kind of general manifestation of divine wrath and vengeance on the occasion of this final judgment upon guilty man. The *"great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great,"* is evidently the same as that previously described under the sixth seal. An important feature is here added, that of its being totally unparalleled, which the awful description of it there given would certainly lead us to infer. As the sixth seal will shortly be the subject of investigation, when treating of the Battle of Armageddon, it will be needless here to say more, than that the great earthquake denotes a tremendous and unparalleled revolution in the whole existing state of the world, and that especially it will overthrow those Anti-christian systems in Church and State, and those heathen idolatries which have for so many ages corrupted and destroyed mankind.

"And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God to, give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."—Rev. xvi. 19.

The only place in which "*the great city*" is mentioned besides, is chapter xi. 8,—"*And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*" This great city evidently stands opposed to "*the Holy City, New Jerusalem,*" or true Church, and doubtless is the emblem of the Anti-christian community, not simply the Western or Latin Church, but the whole Anti-christian Church in the East and West—elsewhere symbolized by a "*wild beast with two horns as a lamb that spake as a dragon.*" For, although the Romish Church, or Western horn of this Beast, is elsewhere represented as "*a great city,*" yet the emphatic expression "*the great city,*" as well as the fact of that apostate hierarchy being expressly mentioned a few words onward,—"*And great Babylon came in remembrance before God,*"—proves that "*the great city*" cannot be identical with the Church of Rome.

The division of this great city into three parts, is somewhat difficult of explanation. It is by some thought to signify its complete destruction ; by others, to whose opinion I rather incline, its being split into three opposite factions. "*The cities of the nations falling,*" certainly signifies that overthrow of all those Ecclesiastical establishments throughout the world, not united to Babylon the Great. "*The islands and mountains fleeing away,*" symbolizes the general destruction of all forms of political power, and the "*great hail,*" is the emblem of general destruction, from which escape is impossible and resistance vain, which shall overwhelm mankind and close this awful scene. This last-named judgment, however, will form the particular subject of investigation at the close of this work, which is a sufficient reason for merely alluding to it here.

The vials of divine wrath, thus constitute the means of overthrowing the Anti-christian powers, both secular and

spiritual, as well as all other enemies of God. The dominion of the Civil and Ecclesiastical Wild Beasts having been previously "*taken away*," at the close of the twelve hundred and sixty years, the seventh trumpet "*quickly*" follows, and the effusion of the seven vials which it contains at once begins, and in the course of certainly less than thirty years, destroys their very existence. The twelve hundred and sixty years are, by almost all the commentators, considered to measure the period of the two Beasts' existence; but this is a most palpable error. It is said to be the period of the Papal horn's dominion over the saints (Dan. vii. 25), and of the seven-headed Wild Beast's power to effect his will (Rev. xiii. 7), and of the Gentiles treading down the Holy City (Rev. xi. 2). But not so much as the slightest hint is ever given, that its expiration would terminate the existence of the Anti-christian powers. So far from this, the capture of the Wild Beast and the False Prophet is expressly mentioned as one of the results of the great Battle of Armageddon, which plainly does not occur till the seventh vial is poured out, whilst the twelve hundred and sixty days terminate previous to the seventh trumpet, which contains that vial, having sounded (Rev. xi. 3, 7, 15). This appears also to be the import of Dan. vii. 26,—"*And they shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy it unto the end*;" that is, the dominion of the Romish hierarchy shall be taken away, as a preparatory means to the gradual, but utter destruction of that apostate Church. The notion, therefore, upon which the theories of Faber, Habershon, Keith and others are built, that the close of the twelve hundred and sixty years is the period of the seventh vial, the Battle of Armageddon, the destruction of the ten-horned Wild Beast and the false prophet, is manifestly incorrect.

CHAPTER III.

THE INFIDEL KING OF DANIEL, OR IMAGINARY LAST STAGE OF ANTI-CHRIST.

Theory of an Infidel power to arise in the last days—Two forms in which it prevails—Proofs that the prophecy of Daniel cannot bear this sense—From no reference to the last days occurring in the passage—From the power predicted, prospering till the indignation is accomplished—From the marked pause between his rise and his downfall—Exposition of the prophecy of Daniel—Application of the whole prophecy to the Papal power—The prophecy of an Anti-christ in John denotes the Papacy—St. Paul's Man of Sin sitting in the Temple of God denotes the Papacy—Faber's application of Daniel's prophecy to Napoleon most inconsistent and absurd.

According to the principal expositions of Prophecy of the present day, one of the chief characteristics of the fearful period termed in Scripture "*the last days*," is the rise of a mighty power described in Daniel "*as the king who does according to his will, and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished.*"—Dan. xi. 36. This notion has always appeared to me destitute of any Scriptural foundation, and a thorough investigation of the subject has forced the conviction on my mind, that no such individual is the subject of prediction in the oracles of truth. The manifest importance, however, of the opinion, and the powerful support it has received, render it necessary, that the subject should be fully discussed in the ensuing pages of this work.

Amongst the advocates of this theory, one class contends

that the prophecy of the wilful king has received its accomplishment in part already in the Emperor Napoleon, although they regard some future successor in the title of King of Rome will fulfil the latter part of the prediction. The other class rejects this opinion, and considers it to refer to some final stage of Anti-christ yet to come; "its appearance in the last days, in the form of an individual king, with all those remarkable circumstances of success, cruelty, and sudden destruction, which are to characterize the coming of the Lord."* Instead, however, of separately considering each of these somewhat different theories, I propose first to shew, that the language, which is the strong-hold of both classes of writers, can only apply to a line of potentates stretching through a lengthened period, and then to point out the complete fulfilment of all the predictions respecting it in the Roman Pontiffs.

"And the king shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined, shall be done. Neither shall he regard the god of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god, whom his fathers knew not, shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain."—Dan. xi. 36—39.

The first consideration to which I advert is, that the king spoken of in this prophecy must refer to a long line of potentates, from the fact, that no intimation is given as to

* Quarterly Review, December, 1842.

the period in which he should rise up. To suppose that the Divine Author of Scripture would describe the character and conduct of so marvellous an individual, hereafter to appear upon the stage of the world, without giving some reference to the time of his standing up, is most incredible; yet, the most cursory perusal will satisfy the reader that no hint of this kind is given, when describing his principles and practice. The inconsistency, therefore, of enumerating such a variety of particulars respecting this "*wilful king*," and yet omitting all reference to the age when he should blast the earth by his presence, is a convincing proof to my mind, that the language respects the little horn of Daniel's fourth Beast, and therefore required no mention of what was already known, the period when he should stand up.

It is true, "*the time of the end*" is mentioned (verse 35); but it must not be inferred from this, that what follows occurs either *subsequently* to, or at the time of, the end. The prophecy describes the persecutions of the saints from the introduction of Christianity, and it is natural to mention the continuance of this persecuted state of the Church before commencing a new subject. "*The time of the end*" again occurs in describing his overthrow (verse 40). But to allege this as a proof, that he rises up at or about "*the time of the end*," is to beg the question. Since all agree that the attack takes place at this period, and what is denied is, that this is the period to which the previous description of his acts and character refers. But, in fact, this very mention of the period of the attack by the kings of the South and North upon this potentate, is, altogether incompatible with the idea that he is an individual king. It is the part of a historian to give the era of those events that are more remarkable, rather than of such as are less so; and hence it is but natural to expect (on the supposition that an individual is here denoted), that the rise of such a monster

of impiety and wickedness would be here marked, rather than an attack upon him by the kings of the South and North. Surely if the prophecy of the king who did according to his will referred to an Infidel king, who was to stand up in the last days, some kind of intimation would be given us, when describing his character and proceedings of the time of his appearance, instead of leaving all mention of chronology until this attack upon the monster occurred. On the other hand, if the king who does according to his will denotes,—as almost all commentators of every preceding age have considered,—the Pope of Rome, the little horn of Daniel, and Whore of the Apocalypse,—if the account given of him here coincides with every other description of the Man of Sin, and the chronology of whom is repeatedly given in other parts of Scripture (and therefore unnecessary here), in this case there is an obvious propriety in stating the period of this attack of the kings of the South and North upon the Papal See, because it identifies it with the close of the twelve hundred and sixty years, the well-known period of the downfall of Anti-christ's dominion.

I cannot help regarding as another proof that the Papacy is referred to, the exact coincidence between the statement,—“*He shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished,*” and that in another prophecy respecting the Papal horn,—“*His dominion shall be taken away to consume and destroy it unto the end.*” Observe, it is not said,—“*He shall continue till the time of the end,*” nor, “*He shall be destroyed at the time of the end,*” or any other equivalent phrase, since in that case it could not be applicable to the Papacy, which is not destroyed for thirty years afterwards (Dan. xii. 11). But the language is, “*He shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished,*” in exact conformity with all those passages which describe a period of uninterrupted success for twelve hundred and sixty years, the removal of its dominion at the close of

that period, and its destruction thirty years afterwards, a chronology answering to the two periods of twelve hundred and sixty, and twelve hundred and ninety years at the end of Daniel.

Again : if a single individual, or final form of Anti-christ were denoted by this celebrated prophecy, there would not be that manifest pause, before describing the attack of the kings of the South and North upon him. A new paragraph commences, and the sense evidently experiences a stop. The impression upon any impartial reader, would certainly be, that the power just described continued to act as predicted for a considerable length of time, and then—a particular era having arrived, a tremendous attack is made upon it.

I have thus attempted to shew, that this prophecy of Daniel can only apply to an extended line of potentates, instead of a mere individual or two, as contended by the advocates of the opposite opinion. I shall now proceed to a brief exposition of the passage before us, from which I think will clearly appear the complete fulfilment which every clause of the prophecy has met with in the Papacy, and the obvious incongruity of many particulars, both with the Emperor of the French, and with the supposed future individual form of Anti-christ.

Having in the previous context (verses 32—34), detailed the fortunes of the early Christians from the destruction of Jerusalem to the conversion of Constantine, and briefly noticed the fact that subsequently to that era, they should still be persecuted unto the close of the time, times, and half a time (verse 35), the angel proceeds to describe the character, conduct, and success of some mighty king that should hereafter stand up.

“And the king shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall

prosper till the indignation be accomplished.”—Dan. xi. 36. A king in the language of prophecy usually denotes a line or series of kings. The king of fierce countenance, predicted in Dan. viii. 23, by admission of all expositors, denotes a succession of potentates, through a period of twelve hundred years; it *may*, therefore, here have a similar import. The character of the power is clearly revealed in the above verse. First, it denotes certainly some absolute despotism,—“*He shall do according to his will,*” (compare *αυτοκρατορ*, “*that lawless one,*” 2 Thes. ii. 8). The only law which he regards is his own will, and he possesses authority and power to accomplish it. Second, a most remarkable particular is next revealed,—“*He shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god.*” This passage plainly signifies, that the potentate referred to, shall, in a remarkable degree, aggrandize himself, increase by his own efforts, his power and greatness, so as eventually to place himself, in the estimation of the world, above every object of worship, in earth or heaven!—“*He exalteth himself above all that is called god, or is worshipped*” (2 Thes. 2—4). Third, he is a blasphemous king,—“*He shall speak marvellous things* [the Hebrew is *impious words*] *against the God of gods;*” that is, the king is distinguished from other potentates, not merely by his despotism and his self-exaltation, but also by making impious assertions and blasphemous pretensions against the majesty of heaven. A similar prediction occurs (Dan. vii. 25) respecting the Papal horn,—“*And he shall speak great words against the Most High*” (לַעֲדָתִי *contra*, Gesen., not “*by the side of,*” as maintained by Faber; similarly Lee’s Hebrew Lexicon). Fourth, he is to “*prosper till the indignation be accomplished;*” not the indignation of the king, for then it would be “*his indignation,*” but “*the indignation,*”—some important period of wrath which must be fulfilled,—“*He shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished.*”

The term translated indignation, signifies rather the effects of

the divine anger (*pœna a Deo immissa*, *Ges. in voc.* עַוְוֹ), and from a comparison with other passages of Scripture, it appears to refer to the awful judgment upon mankind, inflicted by the Almighty, in suffering the monstrous system of Anti-christ to overspread the earth. It is certain, the expression is used in some such sense, Dan. viii. 19,—“*Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be;*” and the fact that the awful delusion of the Papacy was inflicted as a judgment upon the visible Church, is expressly asserted by St. Paul,—“*For this cause [i. e., because they received not the love of the truth], shall God send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie.*” Another passage which seems to intimate the same thing, is Dan. viii. 23, which represents the time of the rise of Mahomet (and Anti-christ arose at the same period), as being the full maturity of transgressors. Hence, “*when the indignation shall be accomplished,*” denotes the termination of the divine anger, which was displayed in the judgment of the Papacy, which we know from Dan. vii. 25, is the close of the time, times, and half a time; and there can be little doubt, that it is to the continuance of this indignation, that the prophecy refers a few verses onward,—“*And swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time.*”

“*Neither shall he regard the god of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.*”—Dan. xi. 37. Here we have the character of the king further described. He is destitute of all regard towards the Almighty; he neglects in some way the natural desires of man towards the other sex, and he is free from every principle of idolatrous veneration towards false deities, and the cause of all this is found in that supreme devotion to himself, which the previous verse described,—“*For he shall magnify himself above all.*”

"But in his estate [properly place] shall he honor the God of forces [יְהוָה מְעֻזִּים; i. e., "honor as God, Mahuzzim," or protectors], and a god which his fathers knew not, he shall honor with gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pleasant things."—Dan. xi. 38. His place refers to the god of his fathers in the previous verse, and denotes the place or habitation of God. The meaning of the verse, therefore, clearly is, that the king would pay divine homage to certain beings styled "*protectors*," and honour both those gods and a strange god which his fathers knew not, with costly offerings in the sanctuary of the Almighty.

This may appear at first sight inconsistent with the representation made of *the king* in the previous verse. How can one who disregards every god, yet *honor as god*, certain beings styled protectors, and offer to them, and to a strange god which his fathers knew not, "*gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pleasant things*?" The only conceivable explanation of this paradox, as appears to me, is, that his disregarding every god in the 37th verse, signifies the absence of *real* religious veneration, such as the ancient idolators felt towards their false gods from a belief in their actual divinity. The honoring them, however, as god, with gold and silver, &c. in the sanctuary of the Almighty, denotes a merely *external* worship, dictated by interested motives, such as may, and does, we know, often consist with the most supreme contempt for its object at heart. It is certain, that unless the paradoxical assertions of the prophecy be explained in some such way, the language is palpably inconsistent and untrue.

Similarly, it is evident, that the king's *disregard of God*, also *may* consist with the external worship of the Most High. *The god of his fathers* is classed along with every god as the object of his disregard, yet we have found from the following verse, that notwithstanding this utter absence of all

real religious feeling towards false deities, he worships certain beings called protectors, and *a strange god!* The inference from this, therefore, evidently is, that he *may*, for anything said or implied, *also* honor the god of his fathers with external worship, under the influence of worldly and politic motives. Hence it must be acknowledged, that the notion so universal amongst the expositors of the present day, that the king who does according to his will denotes an Infidel king, is totally destitute of any support from the prophecy Daniel; in fact, the probability is strongly against it. He who whilst destitute of any sincere attachment towards any object of worship, yet honors as god certain "*protectors*," and a strange god unknown to his fathers, may naturally be expected with similar inconsistency, to yield outward homage to the God of gods, towards whom he all the while experiences no sentiment of *regard*.

The next verse is so manifestly incorrect as it stands in our Bibles, that I am compelled to offer a new translation. The Authorized Version reads as follows:—" *Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.*"—Dan. xi. 39. Now, if we regard the verb (עשה) as pleonastic, and construe (למבצר) as the object of the verb (רבה), the literal version of the passage will be as follows:—" *He shall do thus [as to] the defences of the Mahuzzim, and the strange god which he will acknowledge:—he shall multiply glory [to them], and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall portion out the land as a reward.*" This version, in which it will be perceived by those who consult the original text, no liberty whatever is taken with it, affords a very obvious meaning:—" *The defences of Mahuzzim*" is clearly a figurative expression for "*defenders of*," that in which their chief strength lies, and probably refers to

the principal supporters of that idolatrous worship,—those; who by their influence, instruction, and example, advocate the worship of the “*protectors*.” Unto these individuals the king shall multiply glory, and shall place them in stations of great authority, and portion out the land unto them as a reward for their services.

To recapitulate the substance of the foregoing exposition. This celebrated prophecy of Daniel has no reference to an Infidel king. It describes rather some extended line of potentates (it may be presumed spiritual potentates from the frequent introduction of religious subjects), who shall stand distinguished from all other powers, by their absolute despotism, unequalled self-exaltation, and impious pretensions. Potentates too, who, destitute of all true piety, and yet raised far above the absurdities of paganism, should from motives of policy, offer divine homage to, and lavish costly offerings upon certain protectors, and a strange god which their fathers knew not; who, again, shall be remarkable for some undefined disregard of the natural attachment of man to the female sex, and who shall exalt to stations of authority, and reward with territorial possessions, the supporters of that system of idolatrous worship which they had instituted in the earth. Lastly: omitting all mention of the period of his rise, it expressly states that his prosperity should end, when the divine indignation displayed in permitting Anti-christ to stand up should be completed, thus affording a presumption, though not a proof, that it should also commence with it.

If these particulars are truly contained in this famous prophecy, its application to the Papacy may be dispatched in a few words:—There is one, and *only* one line of potentates, whose despotism has so far exceeded that of all other powers, as to have passed into a proverb; who have succeeded by dint of unceasing efforts and unrivalled sagacity in exalting themselves far above all besides, whether in heaven or on the earth,

and whose blasphemous pretensions to divine attributes resemble the ravings of insanity more than aught besides ;— who too depraved to be susceptible of religious feelings, and too enlightened to view with actual idolatry any of His mere creatures, have yet, with wondrous inconsistency, for the establishment of their power, set up *tutelary* saints, and a Queen of Heaven in the sanctuary of God, whose shrines have for ages blazed with the “*gold, and silver, and precious stones, and desirable things,*” with which superstition has vainly thought to bribe heaven ;—whose supreme devotion to the grand object of aggrandizing themselves, has led them to enforce celibacy upon the instruments of their ambition ;— who have raised to places of power, and rewarded with territorial possessions, the principal supporters of the idolatrous worship they established ;—whose career of prosperity, though occasionally checked, has never come to a stand, from the period when first “*the saints of God were delivered into its hand,*” and is now the only dominion, which, after a lapse of twelve hundred years of changes and judgments, of revolutions and reformations, still holds undiminished its ancient sovereignty, still “*sits upon many waters,*” and rules with undisputed sway over “*peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.*”

It thus appears, that instead of predicting a final stage of Anti-christ to arise in the last days, there does not exist a more striking description of the Papacy, than the miscalled Infidel king of Daniel ; but I have further to remark, on the gross absurdities which abound in the theory of Faber, Habershon, and others, that the prophecy received its accomplishment in the person of Napoleon Buonaparte, as the head of Revolutionary France :—

1st. The idea that the desire of women means Christ, is totally unjustifiable, as well as absurd. The desire of women clearly denotes that affection of which women are the *objects*,

and not the *subjects*. It is thus the ancient versions translate the expression (the Syriac has *concupiscentiam*). The prophecy, therefore, is clearly identical with that of the Apostle Paul, "*forbidding to marry*," and refers to the constrained celibacy of the Romish clergy.

2nd. The plain declaration that "*he should worship a god whom his fathers knew not*;" or, as it is also styled, "*a strange god*," is explained away, so as to mean, "*a god worshipped in a strange manner*." Were such liberties allowable in expounding the prophecies, a commentator might make them utter anything he chose.

3rd. The word (ד'י'ל'ד) is translated by him "*strong military protectors*," and in justification, he remarks, "so far as its abstract meaning is concerned, the term itself is military." This, however, is certainly incorrect. The word is derived from י'ל, *firmus fuit*, and its primary meaning, therefore, is *locus firmus*, nor has it any reference whatever to military affairs in its abstract sense.

4th. The theory that Buonaparte constituted the seventh head of the ten-horned Wild Beast, upon which his interpretation of the military restrainers is built, is grossly inconsistent and absurd, as I have already shewn in a former work (*Downfal of Popery, &c.*, p. 24).

5th. The most gross inconsistency of all yet remains to be noticed. "*The indignation*" of the Almighty, which I have already shewn to denote the displeasure of God during the twelve hundred and sixty years of Anti-christian usurpation,—and which unquestionably denotes that period in the only other place where that expression occurs with reference to yet future times:—"And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be." (Dan. viii. 39),—in the theory of Faber, signifies "*the angry defiance*" of the Emperor Napoleon, and the sense of the passage accordingly

is said to be,—Prosperity shall attend him until his angry defiance be accomplished ; but, still says he, it is by no means implied that prosperity shall cease when his defiance is accomplished ; all that is said is, “ *that he shall prosper until it is accomplished !*” Accordingly he did prosper eight years afterwards, and prosperity did not altogether leave him till another seven years had elapsed, when the Battle of Waterloo, fifteen years after his angry defiance was accomplished, arrested his career, and banished him to St. Helena. Thus, he prospers about as long after the angry defiance is finished as he had before (for his reign commenced according to Faber, 1793 A.D.) ; and he partially prospers seven years after this. The limit, therefore, which the prophecy assigns to the prosperity of *the king* turns out to be really *no limit at all*,—since he prospers as long or longer *after that* era than *before*. And what will the reader imagine was the particular event, which, according to Faber, proved that the angry defiance of the God of gods, by the Emperor Napoleon had ceased ? It was, he gravely assures us, the formal re-establishment of the enormities of Popery in France, by means of the well-known concordat of the Emperor with the See of Rome !

The theory of a still future form of Anti-christ has been also supported by a reference to 1 John ii. 22,—“ *He is Anti-christ, which denieth both the Father and the Son,*” which, it is asserted, the Romish hierarchy has never done, since they affect the highest veneration for God and the Redeemer. It should be remembered, however, that the same Apostle says of this very Anti-christ that it *was then in the world*,—“ *This is that spirit of Anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is in the world.*”—1 John iv. 3. He, therefore, did not refer to anything new which should hereafter rise, or the language would be incorrect ; but merely to a further development of principles already in operation, which agrees with the

nature of the Papal apostacy. Besides, although the Church of Rome does not in so many words deny the existence of the Father and the Son (nor, indeed, did the heretics here referred to), yet the virtual repudiation of the God of gods, as well as of the divinity and sacrifice of Christ, by the Papacy, are too notorious to require proof. In the language of an eloquent writer:—"Popery has not indeed formally apostatized from the creeds of the true faith,—she has not rejected the doctrines of the Holy Trinity, but in the worship of the blessed Virgin she sanctions blasphemies, which trench even on the sanctuary of Christianity,—she has not denied that Christ is the Lord and King of men, but she has practically dethroned him from the heart, and raised a Queen of Heaven in his place,—she has not openly repudiated the divinity of our Lord, but she has Socinianized his character, has elevated his human saints to more than a level with him, as in the rightful parallels of the Franciscans." And, again, "It is to be an Anti-christ, and an Anti-christ does not mean an enemy different and opposed in all outward forms, but a mock and spurious image of the true Lord professing to be Christ himself, veiled in a garb like his, calling himself Christ, and surrounded with the attributes of Christ, and in this way denying Christ, and refusing to acknowledge his history and his power; and such a power cannot come except in the form of Christianity, and in the name of a Church; and such is the exclusive pretence of Popery, at the very time when it is violating, by its principles and its actions, the very fundamental laws both of Christianity and the Church."* Hence, the Anti-christ of John is a power that should practically deny, rather than openly profess disbelief in the Father and the Son. The language resembles that of Daniel in describing "*the king who does according to his will,*"

* Quarterly Review, December, 1842.

since he too, while disregarding *every god*, "*honors gods, protectors, and a god whom his fathers knew not, shall he honor with gold, and silver, and precious stones, and desirable things.*"—Dan. xi. 38.

The passage in 2 Thes. ii. 4—11, has been adduced also to prove the future revelation of an individual Anti-christ. This passage, however, distinctly points out the Papal hierarchy, and the restraining influence of the Civil power in the West,—"*And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way;*" and the marks of Anti-christ set forth in the prophecy so clearly belong to the Papacy, that no doubt can be entertained upon the subject. Whilst the statement that "*he sits in the temple of God, and shews himself that he is God,*" instead of pointing out a material place of worship, refers to the visible Church, in which the Roman Pontiff does sit as God, by claiming the incommunicable powers and perfections of the Great Supreme.

The theory of the Infidel king of Daniel, as well as that of a still future and final stage of Anti-christ, I have now, I think, shewn to be purely ideal, destitute of any support from the testimony of inspiration, and directly opposed to some of its plainest statements. If the arguments I have employed for its refutation are conclusive, those hypotheses will no longer turn away men's eyes from what has truly been called Satan's master-piece, to an imaginary monster; nor will one of the plainest and most striking predictions of the Papacy, which fixes upon that Apostate Church so many fearful crimes, be perverted to an object altogether foreign to the purpose, and thus become—for all practical ends,—totally lost to the Church.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS.

Present state of the question—Palestine still the property of the Jews by right of divine bestowment—Direct promises of a future restoration—These were not accomplished in the return from Babylon—They cannot be understood of the propagation and triumph of the Gospel—Inconsisting mixture of these two notions to form another theory—The probable period of the future restoration of the Jews—Their conversion to Christianity subsequent to their restoration—Objections to the doctrine of a literal restoration answered by a quotation from Dr. Henderson.

Although the doctrine of the literal restoration of the Jews to their own land, is that of the majority of commentators on the Old Testament Scriptures, it is still far from being generally received by the Church of Christ. For my own part, I had long indulged the common prejudice against the opinion, as being at variance with the spiritual character of the Christian dispensation. I looked upon the prophecies which speak of a future restoration of the descendants of Abraham, as descriptive of the spiritual conversion of that people, or else of the future increase and glory of the Church of Christ. Upon examining, however, the testimony of Scripture on this subject, I have had the conviction forced upon my mind, that the only opinion which can be supported upon any fixed principles of interpretation is, that the majority of prophecies which speak of a restoration of the Jews, do foretel a literal resettlement of the Israelites in the land of their fathers.

It is certainly no insignificant proof of the doctrine in

question, that the land of Canaan still belongs to the descendants of Abraham by the right of divine bestowment ; nor can they be in justice deprived of it except for a time. In support of this position, I refer to Gen. xii. 1—3,—“ *Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee : And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great ; and thou shalt be a blessing : And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee : and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*” This grant was repeated afterwards in the following terms :—“ *And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward : For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.*”—Gen. xiii. 14, 15. And, again, Gen. xvii. 7, 8,—“ *And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession ; and I will be their God.*”

These passages clearly describe a gift,—an unconditional gift of the land of Palestine to the descendants of Abraham ; and to remove all doubt as to the real nature of the grant, it is expressly said to be “*for ever,*” “*for an everlasting possession.*” Such a grant as this, must therefore, in the very nature of things, constitute an inalienable right to the possession of the territory referred to. It may be consistent with justice to expel the possessors from the land for a time, by reason of long-continued and aggravated transgression ; but a total and final banishment does to my mind appear wholly inconsistent with the fact of an absolute unconditional grant having taken

place, by which the land was secured to Abraham and his seed for ever. Hence Jehovah speaks by Moses :—“ *And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them : for I am the LORD their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God : I am the LORD.*”—Lev. xxvi. 44, 45.

Accordingly, each time the Almighty has scattered his ancient people, he has also at the appointed season again restored them ; and thus will it again be on the arrival of the period spoken of in Dan. xii., “ *When he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people.*” The original covenant made with Abraham is *still* binding upon the Almighty, and this secures the land of promise to his descendants as their rightful inheritance. The language of the Most High *still* is :—“ *Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar ; The LORD of hosts is his name : If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD ; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.*”—Jer. xxxi. 35—37.

And not only has God secured the land of Canaan to the Jews as their inalienable possession, He has also given the most full and explicit promises that He will eventually restore them to their inheritance. The Scriptures of the Old Testament abound with predictions of a future resettlement of that nation in the land of their forefathers, which upon no definite and fixed principles of interpretation can be referred

to anything else. And with regard to such, Jehovah plainly declares :—“ *For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater : So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth ; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*”—Isaiah lv. 10, 11. “ *The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies ; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured.*”—Isaiah lxii. 8. The limits which I have assigned myself in this work, will not admit of my quoting the numerous predictions which the Hebrew Scriptures contain, in relation to a still future restoration of the Jews. I can only refer the reader to the most important. They are as follow :—Isaiah xi. 11, 12 ; chap. lx. ; chap. lxii. 1—4, 10—12 ; chap. lxv. 18—25 ; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6 ; chap. xxx. 7—22 ; chap. xxxi. 4—9 ; Ezek. chapters xxxiv., xxxvi., xxxvii ; Hosea iii. 4, 5 ; Micah iv. 6—9 ; Zech. ix. 12—17 ; Dan. xii 1, 12 ; Zeph. iii. 8—13.

These vivid and explicit predictions of a future restoration of the Jews to their own land, are considered by the opponents of that doctrine, either as having received their accomplishment at the close of the Babylonish captivity, or as descriptive of the conversion of that people to the Christian faith, or else as relating to the ultimate triumphs of the Gospel amongst the Heathen world. Neither of these opinions, however, can be maintained without grossly violating the established principles of interpretation.

I. That the restoration from the Babylonish captivity is not referred to in the above passages of Scripture, is clear from the following considerations :—

1st. The circumstances which are there said to attend

them on their way, did not on that occasion take place. I refer to the attack upon the Philistines and other nations, the destruction of Egypt and Assyria, &c.:—"But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them. And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod."—Isaiah xi. 14, 15. "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things. The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf."—Micah vii. 15, 16. "And they shall be as mighty men, which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle: and they shall fight, because the LORD is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded. And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away."—Zech. x. 5, 11. The 19th of Isaiah seems to relate to this period, and the 16th and 17th verses clearly describes the judgment upon Egypt by the hand of Israel,—"*In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: and it shall be afraid and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which he shaketh over it. And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts, which he hath determined against it.*"—Isaiah xix. 16, 17.

2nd. The unparalleled tribulation of the Jews, which many passages predict in connexion with their resettlement in their land, confessedly did not happen at the period referred to:—

“And these are the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the LORD ; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas ! for that day is great, so that none is like it : it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble ; but he shall be saved out of it.”—Jer. xxx. 4—7. “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people : and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time : and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”—Dan. xii. 1. “Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury ; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out. There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth ; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up. These two things are come unto thee ; who shall be sorry for thee ? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword ; by whom shall I comfort thee ? Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net : they are full of the fury of the LORD, the rebuke of thy God. Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine : Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury ; thou shalt no more drink it again : But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee ; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over : and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.”—Isaiah li. 17—23.

3rd. The reprobation of the building of the Temple which these prophecies contain, stands in marked contrast to the encouragement and assistance given on the return of the Jews from Babylon. The following passage plainly forbids such an attempt :—“ *Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool : where is the house that ye build unto me ? and where is the place of my rest ? For all those things hath my hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD : but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man ; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck ; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood ; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.*” Isaiah lxvi. 1—3. On this passage the learned and judicious Henderson has the following observations :—“ It appears from these verses, that on being restored to their own land, and occupied with the building of Jerusalem, some of the Jews will attempt to reconstruct their Temple in order that they may worship in it according to the Mosaic ritual. Such an attempt is here met by the declaration, that no earthly structure is worthy of the transcendant excellence of the spiritual and blessed nature of Jehovah. The Jews have ever been prone to glory in, and rest satisfied with, external and splendid services, and the same disposition will actuate the unbelieving portion of them on their restoration. To check this disposition, the Most High asserts His infinite superiority, as Creator and Lord of the Universe, to every thing material, and describes the only Temple in which he condescends to dwell,—the heart of the contrite and spiritual worshipper.”—(Notes on Isaiah in loc.)

4th. The overthrow of kingdoms, and awful destruction of mankind, which is said to accompany their restoration, has not yet occurred :—“ *For, behold, in those days, and in that*

time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land.”—

Joel iii. 1, 2. “Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.”

—Zeph. iii. 8. “When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man. And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning; and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south. The LORD of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar. And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.”—Zech. ix. 13—16.

5th. The exalted individual who is then to reign over them, did not assume his sway on their restoration from Babylon:—“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”—Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. “And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.”—Ezek. xxxiv. 24. It is well known that the Jews on returning from the

Babylonish captivity, though they possessed a leader, Zerubabel, one of their own nation, yet remained in a state of the most servile dependance upon the Persian monarchy. At no subsequent period had they any descendant of David as their governor, much less a king of that tribe, so exalted in character, and illustrious in his reign as predictions describe. It remains, therefore, to be hereafter accomplished during the reign of the Messiah, emphatically distinguished by the name of David.

6th. The uninterrupted safety, liberty, happiness, and glory, which are repeatedly promised to the Jews on their restoration to Judea, confessedly were not enjoyed by them on their return from Babylon. It is a matter of history, that the Jewish people at the period of that deliverance from captivity, were exposed to numerous enemies; they paid tribute to the Persians; they were subsequently oppressed by the Greeks, and on being delivered from them, fell under the Roman yoke, which remained upon their necks so long as they continued in their land. At the period of their dispersion they endured greater sufferings than the history of the human race have on record, and for nearly two thousand years since, have been an outcast, despised, and persecuted people.

7th. The spiritual conversion of the whole Jewish nation subsequently to their restoration, which is in many passages predicted, did not occur on their previous return:—"Therefore, as I live saith the Lord God, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them; and I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee."—Ezek. xxxv. 11. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness

for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”—Zech. xii. 10. Nothing of this kind occurred when God brought back his ancient people from the Babylonish captivity; in fact, the sin especially mentioned as the source of that godly sorrow they experience,—that of crucifying the Lord of glory,—(Zech. xii. 10), then had not been committed. The whole prophecy, therefore, is yet future.

8th. The fact of their national pre-eminence in the earth, and of proving a blessing to the rest of mankind during the continuance of the world, has never yet met with the smallest approach to a fulfilment:—“*I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vine-dressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.*”—Isaiah, chap. lx. & lxi. The second particular enumerated, that the restored Jews shall prove a blessing to the earth, is declared by all the prophets,—“*And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.*”—Micah v. 7. “*And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and winter shall it be.*”—Zech. xiv. 8. “*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.*” Joel iii. 18. “*Thus saith the LORD of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities.*”—Zech. viii. 20. In accordance with these passages, the Apostle Paul clearly implies, that the Jews are

to be the only finally successful missionaries in the earth, in that remarkable passage, Rom. xi. 12, 15.

II. Many expositors, convinced of the fact, that the strong and glowing predictions of a restoration of the Jews, cannot with any truth, be applied to that which took place at the close of the Babylonish captivity, have attempted to spiritualize these promises, by referring them to the propagation and triumph of Christianity. Such a system of interpretation, however, cannot be maintained for the following reasons:—

1st. The fact that, in many of these prophecies, the land to which the individuals are restored is described as being desolate, shews that it does not denote, as these writers affirm, the Church of God, into which sinners when converted are brought. The desolate condition of the Church, if it mean anything, must signify its spiritual barrenness, its being *as distinguished from other places*, morally unfruitful and waste. Unfortunately for this theory, however, the Church of Christ is the sole part of the earth in which spiritual fruit is found. Without its wide circle, all is dearth and barrenness.

2nd. The express statement that the restoration referred to, whether that be literal or figurative, is a resettlement in a land from which either the individuals or their ancestors had been ejected, shews that it cannot denote the progress of Christianity: “*Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattereth Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict, so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord.*”—Jer. xxxi. 10, 28. “*I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong;*

I will feed them with judgment.”—Ezek. xxxiv. 16. “*And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the LORD their God, and will hear them.*”—Zech. x. 6. If the language be figurative, and refers to the triumph of the Gospel and the conversion of sinners, how can sinners be represented as having been ejected from the Christian Church, when neither they nor their forefathers ever possessed a place in it? The interpretation which, to be consistent with itself, implies a falsehood, must clearly be itself incorrect.

3rd. Many instances occur in prophecies, which are acknowledged to be still unfulfilled, in which the conversion of the restored Jews is promised as an additional blessing, by no means involved in their restoration, or synonymous and explanatory of that event:—“*At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*”—Jer. xxxi. 1, 33. “*Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord God.*”—Ezek. xxxiv. 30. “*Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.*”—Ezek. xxxvi. 25; and Ezek. xxxix. 22, 28. But the theory supposes that the restoration itself is the conversion of sinners; hence they experience two conversions, which is impossible. The interpretation, therefore, which involves this is untrue.

4th. In proof of the position that something more than a

mere figurative restoration to the Church of Christ is noted here, I refer to the fact, that the prophecies of the Old Testament repeatedly explain it in such terms as the following, "*being no more a prey to the heathen,*" and "*being delivered of the hand of those that served them.*" But the entrance of converted sinners into the Church of God, has nothing to do with servitude to the Heathen; in fact, the very theory itself goes upon the supposition, that they were of the number of the Heathen themselves previous to their conversion; and that event, instead of rendering them no more a prey to the Heathen, might be expected to produce the very opposite, and expose them to insult, degradation, and hostility.

5th. The difficulty, in fact impossibility, of explaining upon this theory, the minute particulars, described at so much length in many passages, of restored cities, building of palaces, planting vineyards, increase of flocks, &c., renders it most improbable that anything short of an actual restoration to the Holy land,—a land at present barren and desolate, can be meant. The following passages especially contain the strongest proof in support of the present position:—Isaiah lxxv. 21; chap. lxi. 4; Jer. xxx. 18, 21; chap. xxxi. 38—40.

In reference to these and similar prophecies, Dr. Henderson remarks:—"There is such an obvious description of the desolation of Palestine, and such express mention of a restored land, mountains, vineyards, fields, houses, flocks, &c., which cannot be figuratively understood, that with no hermeneutical propriety can the scene be placed in the Gentile world, or regarded as exhibiting the state of Gentile Christianity."—(Preface to Com. on Isaiah).

The above arguments apply with equal force to a still different interpretation of the prediction of a Jewish restoration, adopted by some expositors,—that which refers them to the conversion of that nation to Christianity. The theory is

in point of fact, substantially the same as the foregoing,—the one considers the conversion of a particular race of mankind, the subject of prediction,—the other regards the general spread of the Gospel, without confining it to any one nation as the subject; but this manifestly does not affect the principle of the interpretation, nor in any degree lessen the force of any general arguments adduced against it.

III. The only remaining theory which I have met with is that which combines the literal and spiritual interpretations, and adopts each according to the necessities of the case. It understands the land to mean Palestine in one part of a prophecy, and the Church of God in another part; the Israelites to mean the Jews in one part of a prophecy, and Christians in another; and the restoration consequently to mean in one part the return from Babylon, and in another part the conversion of sinners to Christianity, thus mingling, with gross inconsistency, the two interpretations above considered:—"This system, or rather no system, refutes itself; for if such arbitrary liberties be taken with the language of Scripture,—if, when the prophet in two different places of the same prophecy uses the same words without any intimation of a difference in his meaning, the interpreter be permitted to say, that the words in one place have a meaning which they cannot have in the other place, then manifestly the Church is at the mercy of the fancy of the interpreter, and all settled consistent exposition is at an end."—(Mc Neile's Lect. on Jews, p. 137).

With regard to the period of the great event which forms the subject of this chapter, though it is nowhere revealed with that precision which belongs to the chronological predictions, the statements of inspiration are sufficiently explicit to enable us to determine its date within a few years. In the last chapter of Daniel it is written,—"*That it should be for a time, times, and half a time: and when he shall have*

accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.”—Dan. xii. 7. This passage has been considered by many to denote that the dispersion of the Jews would terminate at the close of the time, times, and half a time, i. e., about A.D. 1864. I cannot, however, regard it in this light. The time, times, and half, or first mentioned period, appears to me, to denote merely the continuance of the prosperity of “*the king who does according to his will,*” agreeably to the 34th verse of the previous chapter, “*he shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished.*” The second era mentioned, “*when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people,*” does not appear synonymous with this, but indicates a further period, viz., the fulfilment of the whole of the prophecy down to the period of the time of trouble such as never was; and the purport of it seems to be, that the restoration of the Jews to the land of Judea, shall be the period for the accomplishment of the last-mentioned prophecy,—the planting of the palaces of the wilful king in Judea, the standing up of Michael, and the time of trouble such as never was,—“*And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.*” Hence, the opinion, that the Jews will be restored at the close of the twelve hundred and sixty days has no support in Scripture; it is mere conjecture. It may be, however, unquestionably inferred from this passage, that the restoration of the Jews will take place during the interval between the close of the time, times, and half a time, and the accomplishment of the last part of the prediction, which refers to the fall of “the King,” and the standing up of Michael. Other passages agree in stating that it shall shortly precede the Battle of Armageddon:—Joel iii. 7; Zeph. iii. 8; and in the course of the following chapters, the same truth will be illustrated at some length.

I repeat, therefore, that the doctrine of Scripture in

reference to the period of the wondrous and important event of the restoration of the Jews to the land of Palestine, appears to be, that it will occur subsequently to the close of the time, times, and half a time, 1864, or 1866 A.D., and previous to the Battle of Armageddon, which, in all probability, occurs thirty years after ; that is, it will occur during the period of the effusion of the first six vials of the wrath of God.

There is not the slightest doubt, in my opinion, that the Jews will be restored, whilst in their present unconverted state ; the testimony of Scripture is full and decisive on this point. It is by no means inconsistent with this opinion, that a certain sense of past wickedness, and entreaty for pardon and a removal of the present curse resting upon them, by placing them again in their land, may precede it. But whatever of this sort happens, will be purely of a carnal description, and unaccompanied by any spiritual sorrow, or change of heart ; but as the following pages will bring before us evidence most conclusive, in proof that the conversion of the Jews to Christianity, occur after their restoration to the land, I shall not formally discuss the point at present.

The history of the Jewish people after their restoration, as it is revealed in many prophecies of the Old Testament Scripture, is replete with instruction as well as intense interest. As, however, the leading events will come under notice in the ensuing chapters, I shall omit all mention of them here.

“ That the Jews shall cease to exist as a distinct race, on their incorporation into the Christian Church, the Bible nowhere teaches ; nor is such an event probable in the nature of things. But if they shall exist as believing Jews, on what principle can it be maintained that they may not live in Palestine, just as believing Britons do in Britain, believing Americans in America ? Christianity does not destroy nationality, nor require an amalgamation of the different races of

mankind, however it may insist that, in a spiritual point of view, all its subjects constitute but one people and one nation, holy and peculiar, the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. If the Jews had received the Messiah, when preached to them by the Apostles, there is no reason to suppose that they would have been expelled from their own land ; so that whatever admissions of Gentiles there might have been into their community, it would still, in the main, have been made up of Jews, as in fact, ' the Churches of God ' were, ' which in Judea, were in Christ Jesus.' Nor is there anything in what I conceive to be the doctrine of Scripture on this subject, at all at variance with its representations respecting the spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ. The Jews, when converted, will be required to conform, in every point, to the laws of that kingdom, precisely as the Gentiles are on their becoming subject to its Head and Lord. Not the slightest hint is given, that any forms of ecclesiastical polity, or any modes of worship will obtain among the restored Jewish converts, different from those instituted by the Apostles.

"As to the degree of temporal prosperity promised to them, it appears to have special respect to the long-continued circumstances of adversity in which they have lived ; and may, perhaps, after all, differ but little from that which will be enjoyed by the members of the Divine Kingdom generally, during the happy period of the Millenium."—(Dr. Henderson's Pref. to Com. on Isaiah.)

CHAPTER V.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

Mistaken idea generally prevalent on this subject—Passages of Scripture which describe this tribulation as unparalleled—It refers exclusively to the Jews—It occurs at the very close of their present dispersion—It arises from a tremendous assault upon Jerusalem by all the nations of the earth—The 3rd chapter of Joel describes this attack—Other predictions of that event—Particulars of this Great Tribulation.

Another important subject of inquiry connected with the last days—is, the time of trouble, such as never was and never shall be, or as it is often termed, “THE GREAT TRIBULATION.” The common opinion respecting this period of suffering is—that it refers to the Christian Church,—that it will consist in a dreadful persecution,—and that it will occur towards the close of the great period of 1260 years. The death of the witnesses of God,—Rev. xi. 7., is considered by the Expositors of Prophecy to refer to that event, and they who have “*come out of great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,*”—Rev. vii. 14., are thought to represent the subjects of it after reaching Heaven. Such an opinion, however, is totally devoid of any real evidence, and contradicts the conclusive testimony of Scripture, as to the period, nature, and subjects of this unparalleled tribulation.

In order to prevent the possibility of confounding two or more different troubles predicted in the Scriptures together, and thus ascribing to one period of distress, circumstances which do not belong to it, I shall confine myself, in this inquiry, to such few passages as expressly speak of this period of suffering as wholly unparalleled. Such passages, beyond all

doubt, must apply to the same period, since the fact of the tribulation being such as never was and never will be, in the very nature of things, can only apply to one and the same event.

The only places in which this great tribulation is described under that character, are the following :—

“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.” Jer. xxx. 7. *“And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”*—Dan. xii. 1. *“A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.”*—Joel ii. 2. *“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”*—Matt. xxiv. 21.

If these passages of Scripture be considered apart from all preconceived notions, the following truths will at once be evident :—

First.—That the tribulation such as never was, is confined to the Jewish nation, and has no reference whatever to the Christian Church. In the first passage quoted, the prophecy is thus introduced,—*“These are the words concerning Judah and Israel,”* and the tribulation is termed—*“Jacob’s trouble,”* without any reference to the world at large as being involved in it. In the passage from Daniel the same thing seems clearly implied in the language used to describe the trouble, viz. : *“such as never was since there was a nation,”* or as the meaning evidently is, *“since they were a nation;”* whilst there is no mention of the trouble as falling upon the world. The third passage, Joel ii. 1, is more decisive in proof

of this circumstance than either of the preceding, "*Blow ye the trumpet in Zion.*" "*Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach; wherefore should the heathen say, where is now your God?*" This clearly proves that the rest of the world is exempt from this trouble, for if it comprehended all mankind how could the Jews become a reproach to the heathen by enduring it? Lastly,—in Matt. xxiv. 21, it must denote some judgment falling upon the Jews in the city of Jerusalem, otherwise they could not be directed to flee from that city as a means of escaping it. We may therefore consider the first particular, respecting this tribulation, as clearly established,—that of its being a period of unparalleled affliction to the Jewish nation alone.

Second.—That the time of this visitation is that of the termination of their captivity. The passages just quoted plainly assert this; in fact, the trouble referred to is represented as the occasion of their final deliverance. "*In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, I will break thy yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him.*"—Jer. xxx. 8. "*At that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.*"—Dan. xii. 1. "*Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people, . . . and say, behold I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen.*"—Joel ii. 18, 19.

Third.—That the trouble referred to will arise from a tremendous attack upon the city of Jerusalem, by countless and implacable hosts of enemies. This will at once be evident if we reflect, that the deliverance of the Jews from this trouble is expressly said to be, their deliverance from the yoke of their enemies:—" *He shall be saved out of it, for it shall come to pass in that day I will break his yoke from off thy neck,*" &c.—Jer. xxx. 7, 8. So that saving them out of their tribulation, is also breaking their yoke from off their neck. The

same thing is also evident from Joel ii. 17,—“*Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them.*” This passage proves that if not delivered from this tribulation, the Jews would still continue, or again be placed, as the case might be, under the yoke of their enemies. The heathen would still rule over them. It is therefore certain, that the tribulation of the last days must arise from some mighty effort of the nations of the earth, to perpetuate the captivity of the ancient people of God, to fix or else re-fasten their yoke upon their necks, or, otherwise, in being rescued from their trouble they would not also be delivered from their captivity.

Accordingly, the context of the passage from Joel plainly ascribes the distress of the Jews, during this unprecedented visitation, to a siege and capture of the city of Jerusalem, by a countless army of figurative locusts. “*For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion.*”—Joel i. 6. “*The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array.*”—Joel ii. 4, 5. The opinion of the Commentators is, that the prophecy of Joel is to be understood in a literal sense, as foretelling a plague of locusts; but if this be true, how is it that no records of such a dreadful judgment have come down to us in history? how is it that these locusts are represented as coming from the north? and with what propriety could those insects be represented as *falling upon the sword*, and yet remain *unwounded*, as *running to and fro in the city, running upon the wall, climbing up upon the houses, and entering in at the windows like a thief*? These and other particulars, it is manifest, are totally inconsistent with such an idea, and we are

therefore compelled to view *the great army of locusts, &c.*, which God is here represented as *sending amongst the Jews*, (chap. ii. 25,) in accordance with other passages of Scripture, as denoting countless hosts of rapacious and irresistible enemies. In this case,—in accordance with the previous deductions, the Great Tribulation is evidently occasioned by some tremendous and unparalleled attack from a northern foe, producing famine, and the various other horrors of a siege in the first instance ; this is followed by the storming and capture of the devoted city ;—eventually, however, complete deliverance, in answer to their prayers and fasting, is granted to the Jews, and in the destruction of the hostile armies, they are for ever delivered from their yoke of servitude.

The following chapter, from its striking resemblance, appears to be an explanation of the figurative prophecy of the locusts contained in the two previous chapters. It is accordingly introduced by the copulative “for.” If this be correct, the foregoing exposition of the tribulation such as never was and never will be, will be placed beyond all doubt.

1st. The first coincidence I shall notice, is in the period to which both these predictions refer, which is that of the future restoration of the Jews to their land. The 3rd chapter of Joel clearly states this : “*For behold, in those days, and in that time when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem,*”—(verse 1) ; and we have found from other passages, that this is the period of “*the great tribulation,*” especially Jer. xxx. 8,—“*For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him.*”

2nd. The accompanying judgments are the same, “*the sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shinings.*” This passage occurs in both prophecies. That of the locusts threatens “*the earth shall quake before them,*—

the heavens shall tremble ;" and similarly in the 3rd chapter it is, "*the heavens and the earth shall shake ;*" intimating clearly, that tremendous convulsion and universal judgments will characterize the period of fulfilment.

3rd. The consequences of these judgments are the same in both prophecies,—the plenteous outpouring of the Spirit of God, the spiritual recognition of the Divine Being by the Jews, their exemption from all future evil, and their instrumentality in converting the world, are alike represented as the results of the affliction in both prophecies. It cannot therefore be questioned, that both these periods of visitation,—that of the unparalleled plague of locusts, described in the two first chapters of Joel, and that of the assembly of all the nations of the earth, by the Almighty, in the valley of Jehoshaphat, "*to plead for his people,*"—are identical.

"*I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.*"—Joel ii. 28, "*The mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk.*"—iii. 18.

"*And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else.*"—Joel ii. 27. "*So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain.*"—iii. 17.

"*My people shall never be ashamed. . . . I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen.*"—Joel ii. 27 & 19. "*Then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.*"—iii. 17.

"*Your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.*"—Joel ii. 28. "*All the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.*"—iii. 18.

From these numerous and striking coincidences between the prophecy of the symbolical locusts, and that of the mighty conflict with all nations of the earth in the valley of

decision in the following chapters, it will probably be admitted by all, that both predictions relate to the same event, the difference being, that the former is figurative, and the latter literal; the former entering with great minuteness into the feelings, humiliation, and conduct of the people of God, and being solely addressed to them; whilst the latter is addressed to the hostile armies, and scarcely contains any reference to the Jews.

From these remarks, it is clear, that the 12th and 14th chapters of Zechariah refer to the same battle. The following quotation will supply additional particulars of that great and unparalleled conflict:—"Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle."—Zech. xiv. 1—3. "And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour."—Zech. xiv. 11—13.

The same attack is clearly described in Ezekiel, chapters 38th and 39th, as an attentive perusal of that prophecy will shew. From the circumstance of the nations of the earth at the end of the Millenium being called by the same

names, "GOG AND MAGOG," when arrayed once more against the "beloved city," i. e., Jerusalem, it has been rashly inferred, that Ezekiel refers to that event. Nothing, however, can be more erroneous, as I shall have occasion to prove in the next chapter ; Isaiah li. 17, 23, and Obadiah i. 11—14, also clearly refer to the same event.

From the foregoing remarks, then, it clearly appears, that the time of trouble such as never was, or GREAT TRIBULATION, instead of denoting a persecution of the Christian Church, or a period of universal misery to the whole world, signifies an unparalleled judgment upon the Jewish nation, shortly after their return to their own land. It will arise from a tremendous siege and assault upon the city of Jerusalem, by countless hosts of warriors, distinguished by invincible might and valour, led on by the kings of the whole earth. One constituent part of the tribulation appears to be famine, arising from the depredations and desolation of the invading host. The whole land is described as being burnt up and wasted,—the wine and oil dried up,—the barns desolate and broken up,—"*The land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind as a desolate wilderness ; yea, and nothing shall escape them.*"—(Joel chap. i., and chap. ii.)

The principal part, however, of this unparalleled visitation, clearly arises from that awful visitation,—the storming of a great and thickly peopled city, by a mighty, and countless, and infuriated host. This is referred to in the account of the figurative locusts :—" *They shall run like mighty men ; they shall climb the wall like men of war ; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks : Neither shall one thrust another ; they shall walk every one in his path : and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. They shall run to and fro in the city : they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses ; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief.*"—

Joel ii. 7—9. "*Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.*"—Zech. xiv. 1, 2.

There is ground to fear, that the slaughter of the hapless inhabitants of this devoted city, will involve a large proportion of the Jewish nation. The Saviour alluding to it in Matt. xxiv. 22, says,—"*Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.*" The expression of "a remnant," which is often used in the prophecies to denote those who survive this judgment, also affords evidence of the fact. Zechariah intimates, that one half of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be cut off, in his 14th chapter, and in the preceding one, speaks of two-thirds throughout all the land being cut off.

It is probably to this "*residue of the people*" who will escape destruction that the language of Joel refers,—"*Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD,*"

and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them : wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God ?"—Joel ii. 12—17. I think this from the fact, that this assembly for fasting and supplication is mentioned after the storming of the city, and dreadful slaughter of the inhabitants ; and from the fact, that the very next word describes the deliverance of the city by means of the destruction of the foe.

The means employed by the Deity for the destruction of this countless multitude are two-fold,—one by sending a sudden panic amongst them, so that each sha'l attack his fellow in the confusion of the moment,—the other by smiting them with a horrible plague or pestilence, which will waste away their flesh as they stand upon the field of battle :—Ezek. xxxviii. 21, 22 ; Zech. xiv. 12, 13.

The unparalleled destruction of life in this tremendous overthrow of the kings of the earth and all their armies, baffles all attempt at description. The best idea we can form of it, is gathered from the statements contained in the following passages :—Ezek. xxxix. 9, 14.

As this is the greatest, so it is the last infliction of divine wrath, which the awful iniquity of the Jews will bring upon themselves ; for, the survivors of this awful tribulation, blessed as every individual will be with the converting and sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God, will be the principal instruments of evangelizing the whole world, and accomplishing the glorious predictions, which promise a thousand years of holiness and peace.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON.

Want of interest towards this subject accounted for—Important character of the event—Opinion of Commentators as to its nature—This theory untenable—The identity of this battle, with the attack of the nations of the earth upon Jerusalem, proved from the 3rd chapter of Joel—And from Matt. 24th—Three reasons why that chapter has remained inexplicable—An attempt to expound it on fresh principles—Particulars of the Battle of Armageddon deduced from the foregoing passages—Exposition of the Sixth Seal as illustrative of that conflict—Exposition of Ezek., chapters xxxviii. and xxxix.—And Zech., chapters xii. and xiv.—And Isaiah lxvi. 15—19—And Zeph. iii. 8—Real character of this tremendous battle.

The Battle of Armageddon is the inspired appellation given to that mighty and unparalleled conflict with the Kings of the whole world, in which the Beast and the False Prophet are taken and cast into a lake of fire. Although this universal war has been a favourite subject of investigation with Students of Prophecy, yet it has never attracted much attention from Christians in general. Various causes have operated to produce this want of interest. The obscurity which has ever invested the subject,—the distant futurity of its occurrence,—the figurative interpretation which viewed it as a mere conflict of principles,—and lastly, the fanciful and ridiculous perversions of this prophecy, in which some writers have indulged,—all have conspired to render this one of the most neglected portions of the word of God.

It is a question, however, that "*the battle of that Almighty*," possesses the very highest value of every believer in inspiration.

It is in itself an event of unparalleled magnitude. It is the subject of prediction with the writers of the Old and New Testaments, in many, very many passages, several consisting of whole chapters. It is moreover one which will influence for good or evil every inhabitant of the earth, and overthrow those colossal fabrics of Civil and Spiritual Despotism, under which mankind have so long groaned. It is, again, a crisis in the history of the world, to which the signs of the times now evidently point. Whilst, more than all, the voice of the once crucified, but now glorified Redeemer, addresses his people in the language of warning and encouragement:—*“Behold, I come as a thief; Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, . . . and he gathered them together into a place called Armageddon.”*—Rev. xvi. 15.

If we consult the Commentaries on the Scripture, and the works of Prophetical Expositors, we shall find the subject now under consideration enveloped in gross darkness,—all is vague, uncertain, and unknown. Not a few of the ablest writers regard the explanation of the event impossible, and the attempt presumption.

Whilst some Expositors regard this Battle as figurative, and others literal, they universally agree in representing it as a tremendous and final conflict between the Anti-christian powers, and the adherents of the true faith. Bishop Newton regards the prophecy as “a sublime and figurative description, to shew the Downfal of Popery, and the triumph of Christianity.” Fuller thinks the Anti-christian powers will direct all their force against God and His cause; but says, “it is impossible to discover in what way their hostility will be manifested.” Archdeacon Woodhouse despatches this grand and unparalleled conflict in a few words:—“It is the grand and decisive conflict,” says he, “between the Christian and Anti-christian powers;” but regards “it as presumption to explain it particularly.” Jones remarks:—“There is no

necessity for supposing that Christ will marshal armies of his disciples, who will have literally to fight against those of the Beast and the Kings of the earth who support him ; but while they are following Him in spreading the everlasting Gospel, He as King of Kings and Lord of Lords may work the complete overthrow of their adversaries by placing them in collision with each other." Jonathan Edwards, in his "*History of Redemption*," calls it "the last great opposition against the Church," and says, "there will be some way or other a mighty struggle between Satan's kingdom and the Church ;" and Faber, in his "*Sacred Calendar*," thinks the opposite party to the Beast and False Prophet, "are certain kingdoms,—symbolized by white horses,—animated and governed by sincere Christianity."

In opposition, however, to these and other authorities, I would suggest that a general, well-concerted, and determined attempt, such as this confessedly is, on the part of the Anti-Christian powers to crush the cause of Christ, is wholly at variance with the fact that the twelve hundred and sixty years are expired. It is acknowledged by all, that the twelve hundred and sixty years constitute the period of the reign of the Papal horn, and that of the power of the ten-horned Beast to practise against the saints. How then can it be consistently maintained, that the kingdoms constituting the Beast, as well as the kings of the whole world, at the instigation of "*unclean spirits out of the mouth of the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet*," should combine together against the Saints, and reduce them to such straits, that the miraculous interposition of God is necessary for their ultimate deliverance ? Again, the battle of Armageddon occurs, as we all know, under the Seventh Trumpet. But one of the characteristics of the Seventh Trumpet is, "*to give reward to his Saints and them that fear Him, both small and great*." — Rev. xi. 18. Surely, then, it is impossible to

believe that under this trumpet "a religious exterminating war," as Faber has it, should be undertaken by the kings of the whole world against the people of God.

I am greatly mistaken, however, if the previous chapter, in which was described "THE GREAT TRIBULATION," will not prove the means of throwing such a flood of light upon this difficult subject, as will render it one of the clearest predictions which the Scriptures of truth contain. It will be remembered, that when considering that unparalleled period of suffering, it was distinctly shewn by many and striking coincidences, that the celebrated prophecy in the 3rd chapter of Joel,—which describes a great gathering of nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat, and their universal slaughter,—was explanatory of the symbolical language of the two preceding chapters of that prophet, respecting an unprecedented attack of locusts upon the Jewish nation. From the exact identity of time in each,—from the judgments which accompany both,—and from the grand and important consequences represented as ensuing in both instances, it was there I think indisputably proved, that both predictions, that of the locusts, and that of the nations of the earth, relate to the same event. Hence it will follow as an undeniable consequence, that the attack upon Jerusalem, which formed the subject of the last chapter, as the cause of the great tribulation, is the same identical event as the Battle of Armageddon, or gathering together of the Beast and the Kings of the whole world, whose utter overthrow is described in the 19th chapter of Revelation.

This inference follows from the acknowledgment of all Commentators, that this 3rd chapter is unquestionably a description of the final contest of the Anti-christian powers at Armageddon. The images of the harvest and vintage, are employed by the Apostle John, as well as the Prophet Joel, to illustrate the judgments involved. The obscuration

of the sun, moon, and stars, are common also to both prophecies. The shaking of heaven and earth, likewise is alluded to in Joel, and in most predictions of Armageddon, whilst in the place of the battle, and the period of its occurrence, the most entire agreement is observable.

On these grounds, therefore, it appears to me there can be no manner of question, that the attack of the nations of the earth upon the city of Jerusalem, described at such great length by Zechariah, Ezekiel, and other Prophets, which produces that dreadful tribulation, which is said to be absolutely unparalleled, is the same identical event as is described in the New Testament, under the appellation of the Battle of Armageddon. The only possible alternative, is either to reject the theory advocated in the preceding chapter of the Tribulation such as never was and never will be, or else to deny what I believe all Commentators have agreed in considering as undeniable, that the destruction of the nations of the earth assembled together to battle in the valley of Jehoshaphat, in the 3rd chapter of Joel, refers to the tremendous conflict described in the Apocalypse as taking place at Armageddon.

The Scriptures of truth contain another powerful argument in favour of the foregoing theory of the Battle of Armageddon. I refer to the famous prophecy of Christ delivered on Mount Olivet, contained in Matt. xxiv., and corresponding places. No portion of divine truth has presented greater difficulties to the Commentator than this, nor has any successful attempt yet been made to interpret it.

An attentive and repeated perusal of this chapter has fully convinced me, that the utter and uniform failure which has attended the efforts of the greatest men in this department, arises from the following three facts :—1st. That they have not recognized the palpable fact, that a double fulfilment of it must necessarily be admitted, ere we can reconcile the gross inconsistencies which would otherwise abound in the prophecy. 2nd.

That none has observed the remarkable and systematic variation in the language of one Evangelist, from the other two Evangelists in relating the prophecy. 3rd. That the remarkable call to reflection, with which the Saviour suddenly interrupts the narrative, on alluding to the prophecy of Daniel, has been passed by without the slightest notice by every Expositor up to the present day. On each of these I must enlarge a little before considering the prediction itself, and I am much mistaken if these particulars do not prove the key to this obscure and difficult chapter.

I. The most cursory perusal is sufficient to convince any candid reader, that the prophecy abounds with inconsistency and falsehood, unless a double fulfilment be admitted. In one passage (Matt. xxiv. 34), it is declared,—“*This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled,*” and immediately after,—“*Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only!*” We cannot suppose for a moment, that the destruction of Jerusalem was such an important event, as to be thus a few years previous to its occurrence wrapt up in this obscurity; yet, the fact, that the present generation should witness a fulfilment of all that preceded, proves the destruction of that city was denoted. Hence an admission of the above proposition is absolutely necessary. Then, too, the well-known accomplishment of the leading particulars of the prophecy during the Jewish war;—the invasion of Judea by the Roman armies;—the escape of the Christian Jews to the mountains;—the extreme sufferings of those who remained behind;—the appearance of False Prophets, and Messiahs, &c.; all we know did occur at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus; hence the prophecy plainly has received *one* accomplishment. There are, however, other parts of the prophecy, such as the fact of the distress of the Jews being unparalleled both in relation to the past and the future, immediately followed by the obscuration

of the sun, and of the moon, &c., which by no ingenuity can be shewn to have received their fulfilment. Hence, as we cannot charge Inspiration with inconsistency or falsehood, we must admit, in spite of the theories of Philosophical Critics to the contrary, that this prophecy contains a double sense.

II. The remarkable variation in the language of one Evangelist from the other two in relating the prophecy, though hitherto, as far as my knowledge extends, unnoticed by Expositors, is so systematic, as to convince every one, that it must have been done with some special design. Whilst Matthew and Mark agree in describing the attack upon Jerusalem, the consequent tribulation of the inhabitants &c., in such terms as can only apply in their strict and proper sense, to some future and similar course of events,—the only other Evangelist who relates the prophecy, Luke, throughout the passage describes the Jewish war *alone*, and in no single instance employs expressions susceptible of a double sense.

In order to convince the reader of the truth of this statement, I will briefly point out the difference of language observable in these two variations of the same prediction : (1.) The first instance in which Luke differs from the other two Evangelists is, in omitting to use the expression "*abomination of desolation*," and employing in its place the language, "*Jerusalem encompassed with armies*." Had he referred as the others have, to the prophecy of Daniel, in which that *abomination* occurs (Dan. xii. 11), he would at once, as we shortly shall see, have given to his prophecy a double sense. (2.) The next instance, a most important contrast, is, that Luke says nothing of "*the tribulation such as never was, no, nor ever shall be*." He describes, it is true, the sufferings of the Jews during the war under Titus, but nowhere refers to its *unparalleled* character. His language is, "*These be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written might be*

fulfilled," &c. The language of Matthew and Mark, on the contrary, if inspired writers are to be understood according to the ordinary import of the words employed, can refer to nothing but the yet future period predicted in Daniel (chap. xii. 1.) "*And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered.*" (3.) The Evangelists, Matthew and Mark, expressly state, that "*Except the Lord had shortened the days of trouble, no flesh should be saved,*" and adds, "*but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened,*" clearly implying, as I think, that they who escaped destruction were ordained unto eternal life. This language, therefore, can only apply to some future event, since in the previous tribulation of the Jews it was not fulfilled. Accordingly, on turning to Luke, this part of the prophecy is omitted, and in its place we read that which every one knows has received its full and literal accomplishment. "*There shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*"—(Luke xxi. 23, 24.) (4.) Lastly, in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, we find all the revolutions and mighty judgments contained under the Sixth Seal, expressly described as happening *immediately* after the tribulation of the Jews: "*Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken,*" in which representation other prophecies perfectly agree. Luke, on the contrary, omits this mark of chronology when speaking of these signs in the heavenly bodies. After dwelling upon the dispersion and captivity of the Jews after the destruction of their city, and stating that Jerusalem should be

trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled,—his language, in reference to the above-mentioned judgments is, “*And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars,*” thus evidently avoiding that which would, to the former part of his prophecy, give a second and further sense than that course of events which transpired during the Jewish war.

It is thus manifest, that a striking and uniform variation may be traced between this celebrated prophecy as related by Luke, from that which the other Gospels contain. The former Evangelist in no instance uses an expression which requires any further accomplishment than what it has already received in the destruction of Jerusalem, and subsequent events,—whilst Matthew and Mark agree in delivering a prophecy, which no ingenuity can shew to have been fully accomplished on that occasion, and which, therefore, like many predictions of the fall of ancient Babylon, Edom, Tyre, and other cities, is yet destined to receive the grand and complete fulfilment of its awful contents.

III. The call to pause and reflect with which the Saviour interrupts the narrative, on referring to the prophecy of Daniel, has been quite passed by. From the numerous commentaries and expositions upon this prophecy, nothing can possibly be plainer than the meaning of this part of the prophecy,—the reference is plainly, it is said, to that passage in Daniel which describes the pollution of the temple, by the idolatrous standards of the Romans (Dan. xi. 31). Yet, it is certain, that a sudden interruption like this, in order to direct particular attention to the meaning of the “*abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet,*” is a proof that this part of the prophecy required the exercise of unusual caution and deliberation, in order to arrive at its true meaning,—“*Let him that heareth understand,*”—especially as it is omitted in Luke’s Gospel. Hence it is natural to conclude, that the

interpretation of this celebrated prophecy of Christ, given in our Commentaries, is radically wrong.

Let me now attempt,—in humble dependence upon the Spirit of Truth,—to expound this difficult chapter, according to the principles I have thus laid down. A glance only at the prophecy is sufficient to shew us, that its contents may all be classed under the following heads:—

1. The events that precede the time of the end.—(ver. 4—14.)

2. The end itself,—the period of the abomination of desolation, and its accompanying troubles.—(ver. 15—28.)

3. The immediately following judgments and revolutions, symbolized by signs in the heavenly bodies, &c.—(ver. 29, 30.)

4. The coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven, and its attendant circumstances.—(ver. 31 to end of chapter.)

1st. The events which precede the time of the end:—
“And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”—Matt. xxiv. 4—14.

No mention is made of the period of these events, except that they precede the time of the end. I am inclined to think, the language embraces the whole time from the introduction of Christianity, to the time of the end itself. Certainly, History records events which fully agree with the particulars here mentioned, without waiting for any future accomplishment.

The last circumstance, however, mentioned in this part of the prophecy must clearly be excepted, since it is expressly said to introduce the time of the end,—“*This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations ; and then shall the end come.*” This prediction, therefore, respects the future, and is probably parallel with Rev. xiv. 6, 7,—“*And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him ; for the hour of his judgment is come.*” The plain import of the verse therefore clearly is :—“ The glad tidings of salvation will, immediately before the end arrives, be preached to every nation under Heaven, in order to testify their guilt, and justify their universal condemnation, and then shall the end and all its unprecedented miseries arrive,”—“ *The hour of his judgment will come.*”

2. The end itself :—“ *When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand :) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains : Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house : Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days ! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day :*

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved : but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there ; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders ; inso-much that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert ; go not forth : Behold he is in the secret chambers ; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west ; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.”—Matt. xxiv. 15—28.

This is beyond all question the end itself,—“*Then shall the end come,*” says Christ, and immediately adds :—“*When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, stand in the holy place,*” &c. The particle, *therefore*, plainly connects “*the abomination of desolation*” with the previous prediction, as its consequence,—“*Then shall the end come ;*” and when, according to this declaration, “*the end is come, and ye see the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place ; then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains.*”—Hence, the “*abomination of desolation*” is synchronous with the end itself. But, what, it will be asked, is denoted by “*THE END ?*” Evidently some period of dreadful misery and judgment,—“*When ye hear of wars and rumours of wars,*” says Christ, “*see that ye be not troubled, for the end is not yet.*” This caution against imagining that the previous troubles constituted the time of the end, proceeds upon the supposition, that it is itself a period of tremendous suffering, and the following expression, “*these are the beginning of sorrows,*” proves the same thing. But of what is that period

of woe the end? Since it is termed by way of eminence **THE END**, it must be the termination of some great period. Accordingly, I think, there can be no doubt, that it is the period of the last judgments of God upon the Anti-Christian powers, at present dominant throughout the world; the time when "*the mystery of God shall be finished*," and a voice out of the temple of Heaven from the throne, exclaim, "IT IS DONE," "BEHOLD I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW."

THE END, as we have seen, is introduced by "*the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, standing in the Holy Place*." I have already noticed the emphatic manner in which the Saviour warns us against mistaking the import of this part of the prophecy,—"*Whoso readeth, let him understand*." The utter neglect of this caution, observable in all the Commentators I have consulted, is proof sufficient to my mind that the interpretation given of it must be erroneous. On this ground, and also from the fact of its introducing **THE END**, I would suggest that the "*abomination of desolation*," instead of referring to Dan. ix. 27, and xi. 31,—which passages describe the past destruction of Jerusalem,—refers to one of difficult comprehension, which can only be understood by diligent investigation and comparison with other parts of Scripture, and which then will be found clearly prophetic of a yet future destruction of that city.—"*And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days*." — (Dan. xxiv. 29.)

The common version of this passage has one gross error in it. It fixes a definite period of time, without stating *what* it is the time for. A glance at the original, however, will at once convince us, that this is the translator's error. The Hebrew is as follows, "*From the time of taking away the daily sacrifice, to the setting up the abomination that maketh*

desolate, is twelve hundred and ninety days."* That is, an interval of twelve hundred and ninety prophetic days shall elapse between the two events. Now, the taking away the daily sacrifice is, by all the Commentators, considered to denote the cessation of the spiritual worship of the Almighty, which followed the rise of Anti-Christ.† Hence, twelve hundred and ninety years are to be reckoned from the rise of that apostacy in 606, A.D., and this will be the period of the second event mentioned—the setting up "*the abomination of desolation.*" That is thirty years after the close of the twelve hundred and sixty years, or reign of Anti-Christ, the "*abomination of desolation,*"—whatever that phrase denotes,—is set up, or, as Matthew gives it, "*Stands in the holy place.*"

But the following verses in Matthew, clearly prove that some dreadful attack upon Jerusalem is connected with this abomination. The flight urged upon the Jewish people,—the extremity of the danger,—the especial misery of women with child,—all point out some tremendous attack upon the Jewish capital. Hence, thirty years after the close of the twelve hundred and sixty days, we have a future assault upon Jerusalem, predicted by Christ. This agrees, so far as we can ascertain beforehand, with the theory of the Great Tribulation and Battle of Armageddon, already advocated; for the latter event occurs under the seventh vial, and the twelve hundred and sixty days close just before the first vial, (see p. 3), and nearly thirty years may reasonably be supposed necessary for the inflictions of those plagues. Hence the period of the Battle of Armageddon coincides, as nearly as can be ascertained, with this attack upon the Jews which produces the

* On subsequently consulting Rosemüller's "*Scholia on Daniel,*" I find he renders the text precisely as I have done.

† Metaphorice, i.e. Cultus N. T. que sæpe exprimitur phrasibus V. T. quem aufert Anti-Christus. —(Poli Synop.)

"Great Tribulation." There exists, therefore, strong presumptive evidence that they are identical.

The following verses relate to the "*Great Tribulation*," and have been treated at length in the previous chapter. Passing by the reference to false Christs, which clearly, I think, denote future impostors, I proceed to the next division of the prophecy.

3. The signs in the sun, moon, and stars, which immediately follow the end;—"*Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.*"—(Matt. xxiv. 29.)

The mighty revolutions and awful judgments, here symbolized, are in complete accordance with every other description of the Battle of Armageddon, but can in no degree apply to the past destruction of Jerusalem. Every one at all conversant with the language of prophecy is aware, that the sun denotes the Supreme or Imperial power, the moon, Ecclesiastical government, and the stars, lesser dignities. What, then, was the boasted fulfilment of this part of the prediction, in the overthrow of the Hebrew commonwealth? the Roman Empire experienced no injury, no Independent power was dethroned,—all that occurred bearing any similarity to this prediction was, the Governor of Judæa lost his office, but this being a subordinate and delegated authority, can not be represented by that symbol. Nor will any effort of ingenuity suffice to shew that the destruction of merely a province of Rome accomplished the eclipse of the sun. This, then, affords another and a decisive evidence that some future and similar event is denoted by the attack upon the Jews described in this chapter, and the circumstance of these signs in the sun and other heavenly bodies, universally following the awful conflict of Armageddon, is proof almost amounting to demonstration, that the two events are identical.

The next or last division of this chapter, contains the coming of the Son of Man, with its attendant circumstances (ver. 30 to the end.) From the illustrations employed by the Redeemer—the deluge of Noah, and destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, it is evident to my mind, that this event is figurative, and denotes a tremendous and universal judgment upon the wicked. As the next chapter, however, is devoted to this subject, it is sufficient here merely to state, that the fact of this universal judgment, immediately following the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, which accompany the attack upon Jerusalem, is another powerful proof as will then be shewn that the attack is the same event, elsewhere denominated the Battle of Armageddon.

It is thus established, I think, both from the testimony of ancient prophets, and also from that of Christ himself,—that the battle of that great day of God Almighty, will consist in a universal war entered into by all the kings of the earth, at the instigation of unclean spirits out of the mouth of the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet, for the express purpose of spoiling the city of Jerusalem, and destroying the Jewish nation, shortly after their restoration to their own land ; or, more definitely, thirty years after the close of the twelve hundred and sixty days. The attack of this innumerable and mighty host, will occasion to the Jews all that unparalleled misery which is denoted by the GREAT TRIBULATION. Famine and sword will destroy the greatest part of that guilty nation ; but eventually, the prayers of the residue of the people will be heard by their God, and He will suddenly and effectually interpose for their deliverance,—“ *Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.*” The whole of the countless hosts of enemies will, by the miraculous exercise of Almighty power, be speedily destroyed,—and the vast results of the overthrow will embrace, not only the destruction of “ *all the armies of*

the earth," but likewise the downfall of all the governments, both Civil and Ecclesiastical, throughout the wide world. "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."

This is, in brief, the nature and results of the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Its awful magnitude and importance, however, requires a more copious and minute account than I have yet given, and I know not a better plan to adopt for this purpose, than to expound the principal passages of Inspiration, both figurative and literal, in which this tremendous conflict is described. For thus will every particular necessarily come under our notice, and each will occupy that prominence which the Almighty author of the Scriptures in his wisdom has given it.

I. THE OPENING OF THE SIXTH SEAL.

This vision occurs, Rev. vi. 12—17,—*"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake: and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"*

The first Four Seals, according to the able exposition of Dean Woodhouse, consist of brief outlines of the history of the

visible Church at so many different eras. The Fifth also, exhibits concisely, the unpunished and impenitent state of the same Anti-Christian community, denoted by the unheeded cry of the Martyrs for vengeance. This Sixth Seal again describes the overthrow and destruction of that Anti-Christian Hierarchy and its adherents, with the tremendous convulsions which attend it.

“And, lo, there was a great earthquake.”—A great earthquake must denote a mighty convulsion of society, which, like the symbol employed, overthrows the Fabrics which ages have consolidated, and scatters desolation and ruin all around. This is the indisputable import of the image; it therefore clearly refers to that universal and tremendous convulsion which shall, at this period, level with the ground those Anti-Christian systems of Civil and Spiritual Despotism, which have for twelve hundred years combined to destroy the earth. The same earthquake occurs in Rev. xi. 19, and xvi. 18.

“The sun became black as sackcloth of hair;”—in other words, all its power and influence ceased. The sun is the well-known emblem of monarchical authority. The language, therefore, clearly intimates what might naturally be expected to occur; that so unparalleled a convulsion occasions the destruction of the Civil Powers then reigning throughout the world.

“And the moon as blood.”—The opinion of the Commentators, that this emblem denotes the Ecclesiastical Powers, appears highly probable. The sun and moon are the two great rulers of the natural world, and similarly, the spiritual and temporal powers jointly exercise authority over man. The moon, too, derives her light from the sun, just as the spiritual power is created by the temporal. If this interpretation be correct, the expression plainly denotes the utter and violent destruction of all Ecclesiastical governments, as one of

the results of the "*Earthquake such as never was.*" The mention of blood, too, gives reason to believe, that it will be by means of sudden slaughter that the Anti-Christian Hierarchies of the world will be destroyed.

"*And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.*"—The stars of heaven have been rightly interpreted as the lesser powers and dignities, and their fall from heaven as signifying the loss of their authority and office. The illustration employed in connection with this emblem is very striking. The state of society in general should resemble, in its awful convulsion, a tree bending beneath a whirlwind ; and thus would the lesser governors of the world be shaken off from its branches.

"*And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together ; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.*"—What are we to understand by this ? The heavens contain nothing beyond the bodies already mentioned ; it can not, therefore, refer to any further class of rulers, and it appears inconsistent with the brevity of the Apocalyptic style, to suppose it a mere repetition of the previous statement,—that the sun, moon, and stars had disappeared. It can only mean then, I think, the frame-work, as it were, in which they are placed,—the corrupt opinions and feelings, both civil and religious, to which the present Anti-Christian powers in Church and State throughout the world, owe their origin and preservation. On this supposition, there is a peculiar fitness in the image employed in illustration of this event. "*The heaven passed away as a scroll,*"—on which the blasphemies, and corruptions, and idolatries which prevail throughout the kingdoms of the Apocalyptic Beast, are written,—never again to be acknowledged and received by man.

"*And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every*

bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains ; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb : for the great day of His wrath is come ; and who shall be able to stand ?”—

It is evident from these words, that some further and still greater visitation of Divine wrath, will be expected by the wicked,—in reference to which they frantically exclaim, after the convulsions and judgments had occurred, “ *Who shall be able to stand?*” This seems to have entirely escaped the notice of the Commentators, although, as appears to me, nothing can be more clear. This expectation, which leads mankind to invoke death rather than the arrival of the evil dreaded, may refer to the general judgment, which the recent overthrow of all which men had been accustomed to hold sacred, had convinced them must be at hand ; or it may respect that universal judgment which the very next words describe under the figure of “ *four angels holding the winds of the earth, that not a breath should blow on the earth, the sea, and the trees,*” from which the servants of God are sealed. This final infliction of Divine wrath, which appears to me identical with the “**HARVEST OF THE EARTH,**” in the 14th chapter of the Revelations, will form the subject of investigation in the ensuing chapter.

II. THE VISION OF THE WORD OF GOD.

This event occurs, Rev. xix. 11—21,—“ *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse ; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns ; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood : and his name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him*

upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron : and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun ; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God ; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth : and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

There can be no question, I think, that this sublime and awful description is purely figurative. The fact of the Redeemer being represented coming from Heaven on a white horse, proves this,—especially as the very same symbol is employed in the First Seal, which all acknowledge to be figurative. *That vision of "the white horse, and him that sat thereon, who went forth conquering and to conquer,"* denotes clearly the first triumphs of Christianity in the earth. *This magnificent description of the WORD OF GOD upon a "white horse, clothed with a vesture dipt in blood ; and he treadeth the winepress of the wrath of God,"* similarly

denotes the progress of Almighty vengeance throughout the world.

"*He which sat on the horse is called Faithful and True,*" intimating that His procedure on the present occasion, would accomplish the promises so long given to His people. The description given of the conduct of this Glorious Being, is strikingly impressive,—"*He judgeth and maketh war righteously.*" Here is the object of his figurative progress through the earth,—judgment upon the guilty,—warfare against His foes. Since the deluge, man had been permitted to go on sinning against Heaven with impunity,—especially BABYLON THE GREAT, as yet had remained unpunished, and the blood of the saints and martyrs was unavenged. Now, however, complete and final retribution would be poured out upon a guilty world; and though the judgments of the KING OF KINGS would inflict unexampled misery and utter destruction, justice would still characterize them.

The bloody vestment, worn by the All-merciful Redeemer, is awfully expressive of His mission. Instead of being clad in robes of state and grandeur, becoming Him who is KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS;—or instead of assuming the appearance of which the same Apostle speaks,—"*I looked and beheld a lamb as it had been slain;*" on this fearful occasion, He comes forth "*clothed with a vesture dipt in blood,*" Similarly the "*sword proceeding out of his mouth,*"—"*his ruling the nations with a rod of iron,*"—and "*his treading the winepress of the wrath of God,*" too clearly betoken the awful effects to be produced, and prove beyond all doubt, that some tremendous and bloody slaughter of our guilty race, is the object which calls Him forth. Alas! what must be the extent of the tremendous carnage of mankind, to justify the language of the angel who stands in the sun,—"*And he cried with a loud voice to all the fowls that fly in the midst of Heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto THE SUPPER OF THE GREAT GOD!*"

The parties in this terrible conflict are next mentioned,—*“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies;”* that is, the kingdoms of Europe constituting the ten-horned Wild Beast (including England), and the other potentates of the earth with their armies. This constitutes, therefore, the only UNIVERSAL WAR which has ever occurred. No exception, no qualification is stated,—*“The beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies.”*

This mighty and innumerable host are *“gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and His army.”* What are we to understand by this? Surely not that man did knowingly contend with God, and rush upon the thick bosses of the buckler of Omnipotence! It rather signifies that, in pursuing their present object, viz.: attacking the Jews after their restoration, the Beast and the Kings of the earth were, in point of fact, *“fighting against God,”* opposing themselves to the long-pledged promises and solemn oath of the Almighty,—*“I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of SUCCESSIVE GENERATIONS.”*

As already observed, it has commonly been supposed, that the Anti-Christian powers were assembled on this occasion for the express purpose of crushing the cause of God, and destroying His people from the face of the earth. The opposite party in this conflict, *“the Word of God and the armies of Heaven,”* have been thought to favour this theory, or rather to prove it. But, even were these *“Armies upon white horses”* visibly and literally engaged in the battle, nothing of this sort could follow. The saints of God can not be meant by *“the armies which are in Heaven,”* whose spotless and perfect state is symbolized by the *“white linen fine and clean,”* in which they are arrayed. The true interpretation then of this army which follows Christ is, that it is a figurative representation of the important fact, that PRINCIPALITIES and POWERS in *Heavenly places*, will, under the guidance of their GREAT

CAPTAIN, execute the wrath of the Almighty upon the Anti-Christian powers of the earth.

In a conflict of this unequal nature, between man and God upon a battle-field, it can excite no surprise that the particulars of the event are not given,—the result alone is stated. “*The Beast was taken, and with him the False Prophet that wrought miracles before him,*”—i. e. the Romish Hierarchy. The sublime conciseness of this description, infinitely transcends the well-known classical account of a battle, “*Veni, vidi, vici.*”

The utter and irrecoverable perdition of the two monstrous systems of CIVIL and SPIRITUAL DESPOTISM, which have for so many ages leagued with the God of this world for the destruction of mankind, both in England and the rest of Europe, is here set forth in language that can never be mistaken. “*The Beast and the False Prophet were taken, and cast alive into the lake of fire,*” and probably the finest piece of composition, inspired or uninspired, which the world contains, is the description of the entry of the False Prophet, or “*Babylon the Great,*” into the lower regions, in Isaiah xiv. 21 to the end. The 28th chap. of Ezek. ver. 1—19, is scarcely inferior.

“*The remnant*” who “*were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse,*” seems to denote the other kings and their armies, not constituting the “*the Ten-horned Beast.*” These are also styled “*the kings of the earth.*” These potentates and their armies share a similar fate, being destroyed at the bidding of the Almighty. The ridiculous idea of Jones and others, that, their being slain with the sword signifies their conversion to the faith of the gospel by the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,—is completely refuted by the next words; “*And all the fowls of Heaven were filled with their flesh.*”

III. THE ATTACK OF GOG, MAGOG, AND OTHER NATIONS UPON THE JEWS.—(Ezek. chap. xxxviii., and xxxix.

The period of the fulfilment of this prophecy is so plainly stated, as to occasion surprise how it could be referred to the close of the Millenium. Its distance from that of its delivery is denoted by the expressions "*after many days*,"—"in the *latter years*." That it is subsequent to the yet future restoration of the Jews is equally certain: "*Thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste*." Here are the present long-continued desolation of the territory, and the still future restoration of the nation, distinctly recognized as *past*,—"is brought back." But another fact respecting the prophecy is as plainly revealed, though it has been generally questioned; I refer to its fulfilment *previous* to the Millenium. In proof of this, I allege the circumstance, that the conversion of the Jews themselves is expressly dated from the period of the destruction, and ascribed instrumentally to that event; "*The house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward*,"—(chap. xxxix. 32.) "*So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more*,"—(ver. 7.) From these and similar passages it is clear, that this battle is the *era* and the *means*, under God, of the entire conversion of the Jews. Other passages plainly intimate, that the tremendous results of the conflict, will prove instrumental in diffusing the knowledge and glory of God throughout the world, which implies that the Millenium had not yet commenced.—(chap. xxxviii. 23, and xxxix. 7—21.) The attack of Gog and MAGOG, in the Apocalypse, though a similar, is therefore quite another event.

The prodigious multitudes composing this host is a particular, strongly and often stated; "*Thou shalt ascend and*

come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou and all thy bands, and many people with thee."—(chap. xxxviii. 9.) But that which most strikingly exhibits their numbers are the facts, that the weapons of the discomfited hosts shall serve the Jewish nation for firewood SEVEN YEARS, and that the time occupied in burying the bodies of the slain, shall be SEVEN MONTHS.

The object of this invasion of the Holy Land, so far at least as GOG is concerned, is "*to take a spoil and to take a prey, to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited ;*" "*Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil ? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey ? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil ?*" The defenceless condition of the Jews, just restored to their own land, without regular armies or fortifications, in connexion with the proverbial wealth of that people, is one, though not the only, cause of this expedition,—"*I will go up to the land of unwallled villages, . . . all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates.*"

The conflict itself is not mentioned by Ezekiel ; but the results are fully stated. The *immediate* issue of the battle is contained in chap. xxxviii. 21, 22,—"*And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and blood, . . . overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone ;*" so that they will not be slain by the Jews, but by each other,—(see Zech. xiv. 13 ; Hag. ii. 22 ; compare also 2 Chron. xx. 23—25

The remote consequences of this conflict are stated (chap. xxxviii. 19, 20), to be "*a tremendous earthquake in Judæa, which extends to the whole earth, and overthrows every mountain, and steep place, and wall.*" This, of course, is figurative,

and denotes a universal overthrow of all existing governments and powers. The Battle of Armageddon would naturally produce this result in two ways:—First, the slaughter of such prodigious multitudes upon multitudes, must itself be the downfall of many governments and powers; and secondly, the ultimate influence of such an utterly unprecedented destruction of mankind upon the minds of men, must evidently be of the most powerful and practical nature:—“*Thus will I magnify myself in the eyes of many nations.*” “*And I will set my glory among the heathen, and they shall see my judgment which I have executed, and my hand which I have laid upon them.*” The slaughter of “*all nations, and the armies thereof*” in one day,—and that not by opposing forces, but by their own swords, in connexion with horrible pestilence and supernatural judgments, agreeing with the long-uttered predictions of Scripture, will so strikingly exhibit the **RIGHTEOUSNESS, FAITHFULNESS, and TRUTH** of the Deity, that the whole earth must at once confess and glorify God.

The “*angel standing in the sun,*” identifies this Battle with Armageddon; so does the “*earthquake*” (which is clearly the same as that of the seventh vial), and the destruction of all existing governments throughout the earth. Whilst in the place and period of the conflict, the most entire agreement is observable.

IV. ZECHARIAH’S PROPHECY OF AN ATTACK OF ALL NATIONS UPON JERUSALEM.—(chap. xii., and xiv).

This is the most full and minute account of the assault upon the city which Prophecy contains. The xiv. chapter plainly states, that the Battle of Armageddon will, in the first instance, be decidedly favourable to the Beast, and the Kings of the earth,—“*The city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, &c., and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off*

from the city.—(ver. 2). The destruction of surrounding nations by the Jews at this period, is also stated,—“*They shall devour all the people round about on the right hand and on the left.*” Compare Obadiah, ver. 18. The figurative appearance of Christ the Lord is strikingly declared,—“*Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle, and his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives.*” That a personal appearance, however, is not denoted, is plain from its being said, “*as when he fought in the day of battle.*” No record exists, that any personal conflict of God with men has ever occurred, therefore this passage simply denotes, that, as on a similar occasion (Josh. x. 14), “**THE LORD FOUGHT FOR ISRAEL.**” The spiritual conversion of the Jews after the battle, is clearly stated,—“*I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications : and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*”—Zech. xii. 10.

V. THE COMING OF THE LORD WITH FIRE TO PLEAD WITH ALL FLESH.

“*For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh : and the slain of the LORD shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD. For I know their works and their thoughts : it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues ; and they shall come, and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that*

draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.”—Isaiah xlvi. 15—20.

This coming of Jehovah is clearly the same as is described in the vision of the WORD OF GOD (Rev. chap. xix). The gathering of all nations and tongues is to the Battle of Armageddon, and the glory of the Almighty, denotes His Omnipotence, Holiness, and Truth, displayed in that fearful overthrow. The fugitives from the field of slaughter, are made messengers to carry the great tidings to their respective nations, and thus is the divine glory diffused throughout the world. The natural result of this is, that the utmost promptitude and zeal are displayed by all the people of the earth in accomplishing the purposes of Jehovah, so unequivocally revealed in the recent interposition on behalf of His people, and for the overthrow of their foes. A second, or further restoration of the Jews takes place, including all “*out of every nation*” who have not yet joined their brethren.

Zeph. iii. 8—20, is another prediction of Armageddon. That the battle is closely connected with the Jews, is plain from verse 8,—“*Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey!*” It thus appears, that the Battle of Armageddon, denotes an attack upon the Beast and the Kings of the whole world upon the Jewish nation, soon after their return to Judea. It issues in an unprecedented slaughter of the invading hosts, and in the overthrow of all the Governments, both Spiritual and Civil throughout the earth, and its object is, to punish the nations of the earth for their treatment of the Jews.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN.

A further universal judgment upon the Earth—Matthew xxiv. predicts this—The Second Vision of the Sixth Seal refers to it—The 24th chap. of Isaiah describes it—Other predictions of it—Analogous to the preceding dispensations of the Deity—Sodom and Gomorrah—The Red Sea—The Deluge—The guilt of the world greater now than when those judgments overwhelmed them—The general rejection of Christianity—The Anti-Christian despotisms of Europe—Babylon the Great—Signs of the Times not unfavourable to this theory.

That the Battle of Armageddon is not the last infliction of divine wrath that awaits our guilty world is abundantly evident. Numerous passages of Prophecy expressly mention a period of judgment, subsequent to that visitation, and of far wider extent. The 24th chap. of Matthew, after referring to the results of that awful conflict, under the image of the eclipse, or fall of the heavenly bodies, speaks of some universal and terrible destruction, styled "*the revealing of the Son of Man,*" which should resemble the deluge of Noah, and overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Sixth Seal, after relating in the sublimest style, the overthrow of all Temporal and Spiritual Power throughout the earth, and the consternation and despair which should fill every breast, proceeds to describe, under the figure of "*four angels holding the winds,*" and thus "*hurting the earth, the sea, and the trees,*"—a universal and final destruction of mankind, from which none should escape save those who "*were sealed in their foreheads.*"

In addition to these clear and explicit statements of Revelation, the same truth may be inferred from those numerous passages of Holy Writ, which, without any specific mention of time, do yet unquestionably point to some desolating judgment, far more general, and still more terrible, than even that tremendous conflict. Such are the following:—“*Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, and leave them neither root nor branch.*”—Mal. iv. 1. “*Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.*”—Jer. xxv. 32, 33. “*For I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.*”—Isaiah xxviii. 22.

It is obvious that the destruction of Armageddon, confined as it is to one locality, and embracing only the martial hosts who encamp upon that fatal field, can never fulfil the general and unqualified language of these and similar predictions. Besides, they speak of a progressive calamity which passes from nation to nation. It is, therefore, manifest, that something more general and more terrible than that fearful overthrow, is yet in reserve for guilty man.

The novelty of the present theory and its awful importance, must be my excuse in proceeding now at some length, to establish, if possible, the opinion, that the conflict of Armageddon, issuing in the overthrow of all present Governments, both Civil and Spiritual, and thus occasioning terror and dismay throughout the earth, will speedily be followed by a general destruction of the human race, by some infliction of divine wrath, from which none will be exempted, but the real

children of God. In this attempt, I shall confine myself to three of the principal passages which describe this event, viz. :—Matt. xxiv. 30—42 ; Rev. vii. 1—4 ; Isaiah xxiv. .

I. THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN.

“ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven : and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now learn a parable of the fig-tree ; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh : So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away ; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Then shall two be in the field ; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill ; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore : for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”—Matt. xxiv. 30—42.

The event to which this prophecy refers, unquestionably occurs soon after the previous mentioned signs in the heavenly bodies, which I have already shewn denotes the results of Armageddon. The opinion of many Expositors, that it was fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem, cannot be reconciled

with the concomitant event,—the mission of the angels to gather together the elect of God from one end of the earth to the other. Another more general opinion, which refers the coming of the Son of Man to the period of general judgment, is equally untenable. The signs in the sun, moon, and stars, we have already seen, denote the results of the battle of Armageddon, and this advent of Christ is said immediately to succeed it,—“*THEN shall appear the sign of the Son of Man.*” To interpret this language, therefore, as referring to an event occurring at least a *thousand years* after, is manifestly *unfair*. The representation, too, in ver. 40, “*Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left,*” is altogether inconsistent with the period of the day of judgment, which will summon ALL, without any exception, to the tribunal of justice, instead of one being taken and the other left. If, therefore, in this remarkable prophecy, we are to understand words in their obvious sense, “*the coming of the Son of Man,*” or, “*the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed,*” denotes a period *shortly subsequent* to that overthrow of all Temporal and Spiritual power throughout the world, which is uniformly ascribed to the battle of Armageddon.

With reference to the nature of this advent of the Son of Man, it is well known, that two opposite opinions divide the Church,—that of a *figurative* and that of a *personal* coming. That the same language is employed in cases which do not denote a real and visible coming, is acknowledged on both sides. Isaiah xix. 1, and Rev. ii. 5, are unquestionable proofs of this statement. It *may*, therefore, signify a figurative coming here. There are, however, certain illustrations of this advent, employed by the Saviour in the immediate context, which have placed the matter beyond all doubt, as far as my own judgment is concerned. A few verses previous we read, “*for as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man*

be; for wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." These illustrations of the Messiah's advent, especially the latter, appear to me to fully demonstrate its figurative nature. It argues the universality of His appearance, from the nature and design of that event. The sense of the passage is, "the coming of the Son of Man shall be as universally perceived as the lightning of heaven, *because* it will consist in the general manifestation of His wrath upon the guilty wherever they exist. As the eagle scenteth the prey from afar, and is guided thither by the force of instinct, wherever it is found, so will '*the wrath of the Lamb*' discover the moral carcase, and consume it in that great day." I can conceive of no other meaning attaching to these illustrations of the advent of Christ; and its correctness is placed beyond all doubt, by the connexion in which the latter image occurs in another place (Luke xvii. 37.) It there forms the answer of our Lord to His disciples, when, on His saying, "*Then shall be two men in one bed, the one shall be taken and the other left;*" they inquire, "*Where, Lord?*" Since, therefore, the same image, the same language is employed by Christ to illustrate His coming in the clouds of Heaven, and also some universal judgment upon a guilty world, the inference appears too obvious to admit of doubt, that both events are identical.

Further illustrations of the coming of the Son of Man, supply still more decisive evidence of its judicial and figurative nature. I refer to the deluge, and the destruction of the cities of the plain. These dreadful visitations, the former only of which occurs in Matthew, but both of them in Luke xvii. 25—30, are described in all their fearful characters of sudden, total, and overwhelming destruction,—as illustrative of "*the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed.*" The conclusion, therefore, which seems naturally to follow is, that the coming of the Son of Man, here means what we know it does

in some passages, not a personal appearance, but a manifestation of His wrath and vengeance, which, like the judgments to which it is compared, shall come upon men whilst engaged in all the usual avocations and pleasures of life, ignorant of its approach, “AND OVERWHELM THEM ALL.”

“*The coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven,*” therefore, denotes no visible appearance of the Lord of Glory, but a fearful infliction of Divine vengeance upon guilty man. It is parallel with Dan. vii. 13, and Rev. xiv. 14, and it is remarkable that the circumstance of coming in a cloud, which occurs in all of these passages, also occurs in Isaiah xix. 1, “*Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt;*” which none interpret as a personal appearance.

There are two important characteristics of this judgment, which demand especial notice,—the universality of its extent, and the exemption of the righteous. The universal extent of this destruction, which distinguishes it from every other visitation of Divine wrath since the deluge, is repeatedly mentioned: “*WHERESOEVER the carcase is, there shall the eagles be gathered together.*” “*As a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell upon the face of the WHOLE EARTH.*” The same inference follows from the awful events to which it is compared,—the deluge, and the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah,—both of which visitations were of this universal character: the one destroying the whole world, the other whole cities.

The repetition of the language in each instance, “AND DESTROYED THEM ALL,” seems intended to direct attention to that fact, as one which should particularly characterize the coming judgment. There can therefore, it strikes me, be no question that the destruction which the *revealing of the Son of Man* denotes will extend to the whole world, will embrace all nations, languages, and tongues;—that neither power, honor, wealth, nor any other temporal possession will exercise

the slightest influence in averting this universal destruction from individuals or nations, but that the language of inspiration will receive its full and literal accomplishment. "*The day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and ALL THE PROUD, yea, and ALL THAT DO WICKEDLY shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, and leave them neither ROOT NOR BRANCH.*"—(Matt. iv. 1.)

In the midst of this tremendous and universal infliction of Almighty vengeance upon mankind, the servants of God, as in the case of the deluge, and the destruction of the cities of the plain, will be protected by some special interposition of Heaven. The proofs of this fact are numerous and decisive : "*Then shall two be in the field ; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill ; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*"—(Matt. xxiv. 40, 41.) The evident import of which is, that whilst all localities and all conditions of society shall be alike exposed to the overwhelming desolation, certain individuals in *each* shall be delivered out of it, and others left to their fate. The language of a previous verse seems parallel with this : "*And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*"—(ver. 31.) The sealing of the servants of God in their forehead, (Rev. vii. 3,) as we shall shortly see, denotes the same thing ; and all those passages which inculcate caution, watchfulness, hope, &c. upon the people of God at this tremendous period, imply the same fact. "*Watch, therefore : for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.*"—(Matt. xxiv. 42.) "*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.*"—Luke xxi. 36.

II. THE SECOND VISION UNDER THE SIXTH SEAL.

*“And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.”—*Rev. vii. 1—4.

On referring to the close of the previous chapter, it will at once be seen, that the expression *“after these things,”* refers to that unparalleled revolution and tremendous overthrow of all Civil and Spiritual Despotism,—produced by the Battle of Armageddon. Hence, there can be no question, that the prophecy of the *“four angels hurting the earth,”* relates to the same period as *“the coming of the Son of Man.”* In the one case, after relating the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, it is added:—*“THEN shall appear the sign of the Son of Man;”* in the other, after relating the same appearances, we read,—*“After these things I beheld four angels standing upon the four corners of the earth.”*

The particular means by which this judgment is inflicted, are revealed so clearly as to occasion surprise how the Commentators could so universally have mistaken this. The prophecy describes *“four angels holding the four winds of the earth,”* and in order to point out the object of this employment, these angels are described in the next verse as those *“to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea.”* Hence, it is plain, that it is the holding the four winds from the earth that constitutes the judgment referred to. Immediately

upon commencing the work of destruction, "*an angel ascends from the east, having the seal of the living God, and cries out with a LOUD VOICE* [intimating the urgency of the case], *Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.*" The infliction of evil influence, previously in operation, then ceases, in order to allow time for the sealing of the elect, which is described in the following five verses. The theory, therefore, of all the Commentators I have ever met with, that the holding the winds denotes a restraint of their mischievous impetuosity, whilst the servants of God are sealed, is manifestly false,—otherwise the effect is placed before the cause, and a special messenger is commissioned to command what was already done.

In extent, this desolating judgment clearly embraces all nations, all ranks, all conditions of mankind. The language is,—"*Hurt not the sea, neither the earth, nor the trees.*" A slight acquaintance with the imagery of the Apocalypse, is sufficient to teach us, that these expressions point out the whole world as the scene of the visitation, and the prophecy stands out in marked prominence from every other prediction of this book, in one particular,—that while other woes and judgments are confined to some partial sphere of influence, this on the contrary, is of unlimited extent. The Trumpets, for instance, affect a third part of the earth, or of the sea, or of the rivers, or of the sun, or of men. The vials are poured on the earth, or on the sea, or on the fountains, or on the Heavenly bodies, or on the throne of the Beast, or on the Euphrates. This Sixth Seal, however, having first destroyed all Governments, both Civil and Spiritual, throughout the earth, then proceeds to bring down some undefined injury upon the earth, sea, and trees; *i. e.*, upon the civilized and rude nations of the world,—upon the great ones as well as them that are low,—the same fact, I mean the universality of its

influence, is also signified by the position of the angels, "*who stand upon the four corners of the earth,*"—a phrase always in the Scriptures expressive of TOTALITY.

It thus appears, that the second vision of the Sixth Seal, undoubtedly refers like the xxiv. of Matthew, to a universal judgment, and also has its accomplishment like that prediction, shortly subsequent to the Battle of Armageddon. In the circumstance of the servants of God being preserved by the special interposition of Heaven, I need scarcely say, this prophecy perfectly agrees with the other,—"*And I heard the number of them which were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.*" It must not be supposed, however, that this is the whole number of THE SEALED ; it appears to me that the number of Israelites alone are mentioned, and that the Christians are not enumerated. Both classes appear to be comprised in "*A great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.*"—(Rev. vii. 9.) One of the readings of the 4th verse, given by Griesbach, supports this idea,—it is, "*Of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty thousand were of all the tribes of the children of Israel.*"

III. THE UTTER DESOLATION AND DESTRUCTION OF THE EARTH PREDICTED BY ISAIAH.

"*Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest ; as with the servant, so with his master ; as with the maid, so with her mistress ; as with the buyer, so with the seller ; as with the lender, so with the borrower ; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled : for the LORD*

hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.—(Isaiah xxiv. 1—6.)

“When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done. They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea.”—(ver. 13, 14.)

“Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall and not rise again. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the Kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.”—(ver. 17—23.)

This, and the three following chapters, evidently refer to the time of the end. The one quoted (the 24th) strikes me as the most awful chapter in the whole Bible. It describes

in the most explicit and diversified language,—an utter subversion of all society, attended by the all-but-total destruction of our guilty race, extending to all classes, all conditions, all nations, from which escape should be impossible and resistance vain,—and teaches that the guilt of mankind has brought down this awful judgment upon the world.*

This magnificent, yet awful chapter, has been almost universally passed over by the Commentators, as containing nothing remarkable. It probably refers, they say, to some desolation of Palestine, by the enemies of the Jews in former ages; and the punishment of the “*Kings of the earth, and the host of the high ones*,”—(ver. 21,)—which clearly denotes the universal overthrow of all power, both temporal and spiritual, throughout the world,—is actually explained to signify the judgments inflicted upon certain Jewish Kings individually, as they succeeded each other upon the throne!

Rejecting, therefore, an interpretation so opposed to common sense, the plain import of the Prophecy, appears to be just like the two previous passages, a UNIVERSAL JUDGMENT, embracing all ranks and all conditions of mankind. The terms employed are such as naturally designate the globe itself, and one of the words (תבל) is never used to signify anything else. The amazing variety of expression, too, confirms the opinion, that the Prophecy denotes universal ruin and general destruction. We have “*emptieth the earth*,” “*maketh it waste*,” “*turneth it upside down*,” “*scattered the inhabitants*,” “*the earth is utterly emptied*,” “*utterly spoiled*,” “*the earth mourneth*,” “*and fadeth*,” (literally, “*droopeth the head*”), “*the world languisheth and fadeth*,” “*the high ones of the earth languish*,” “*the curse devours the earth*,” “*the inhabitants are burned*,” “*the earth is utterly broken down, and clean dissolved*,” “*moved exceedingly*,” “*reels*

* Universam orbem communiter Interpretes et bene hinc accipiunt de generali atque extrema totius mundi vastatione.—*Poli Synop.*

to and fro like a drunkard," "IT SHALL FALL AND NOT RISE AGAIN." This heaping of expression upon expression, which is altogether without any parallel in the Scriptures, can only be explained on the principle, that no language could be found strong enough to do justice to the sentiment, and that which no single expression, however forcible, could convey, is attempted by repeated efforts.

The desolation and destruction, therefore, threatened against guilty man in this remarkable Prophecy, is of universal extent. The fact of involving all classes of society is strikingly set forth in the 2nd verse, and the utter hopelessness of escape in the 18th. It thus coincides with the previous passages in Matt. xxiv., and Rev. vii.

The same agreement is observable in the exemption of the righteous, "*When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done;*" that is, the proportion of individuals saved from the universal destruction of that awful day, shall be few as the scattered olives and grapes found by the gleaners; and the fact that these shall consist of the servants of God, appears evident from the subsequent account of them, "*They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord.*"

Two passages may be adduced in proof of the identity of the time of this Prophecy and that of the two preceding quotations of Scripture: the one is the 21st and 22nd verses, which clearly denote the Battle of Armageddon,—the other is the 23rd verse, which, by the Commentators generally, is referred to the period of the Millennial glory. In all three particulars, therefore, that of the universality of the judgment, the exemption of a righteous remnant, and the period of its fulfilment, this awful Prophecy perfectly coincides with the two preceding.

Other minor predictions of this judgment occur in various parts of Scripture.

"A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth ; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh ; he will give them that are wicked to the sword saith the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of Hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth : they shall not be lamented neither gathered, nor buried ; they shall be dung upon the ground."—(Jer. xxv. 31—33.)

"Howl ye : for the day of the LORD is at hand ; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt : and they shall be afraid : pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them ! they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth : they shall be amazed one at another ; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate : and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light : the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity ; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible."—(Isaiah xiii. 6—11.)

"For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be : yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be."—(Psalm xxxvii. 10.)

"Though I make a FULL END of all nations whither I have scattered thee."—(Jer. xxx. 11.)

"Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies : thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger : the LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them,

Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.”—(Ps. xxi. 8—10.)

“Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron: thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”—(Ps. ii. 8, 9.)

“Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. Alas! who, shall live when God doeth this!”—(Num. xxiii. 19 & 23.)

These, together with many other passages, appear to me illustrative of a universal destruction of the wicked, subsequent to Armageddon. This latter conflict destroys, it is true, the innumerable hosts who encamp upon that field of blood, and overthrows every Civil and Spiritual power throughout the world. But the COMING OF THE SON OF MAN, or, as it is termed in Rev. xiv. 15, “THE HARVEST OF THE EARTH,” is confined to no particular locality, but embraces in its wide sphere the whole world,—burning up the wicked as stubble, and thus preparing the earth for the happiness and glory of the Millenium. The figurative character of the Apocalypse leads me to believe, that the resurrection of the Saints, and the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ over the earth, are to be understood in a Spiritual rather than a literal sense. It is, however, confessedly a most difficult question, and I therefore abstain from expressing any confident opinion. The thousand years of universal light, holiness, happiness, and glory on earth having expired, a few years are sufficient to occasion another final attack of the wicked upon the people of God,—when fire comes down from Heaven and destroys them. It is at this period that the SECOND ADVENT of Christ takes place,—that is, his second personal appearance in our lower world, and his object will then be—to judge the quick and the dead, and destroy the earth and the works therein.

The foregoing evidence from Scripture, in favour of the

doctrine of an approaching universal infliction of divine vengeance on our guilty world, ought to command the assent of every unprejudiced mind ; yet, the novelty of the opinion, the awful nature of the judgment, together with its contrariety to all the views and hopes of the Church, may prevent its being at once acknowledged to be the doctrine of Inspiration. I do not, however, doubt, that in proportion as previous impressions wear off, and the signs of the times become yet more dark and lowering, the Christian will as naturally look forward to the "COMING OF THE SON OF MAN," as the appointed means of the spiritual renovation of the world, by the destruction of the wicked, as he does to the death of the body as a means of its resurrection in a state of glorious immortality.

In the mean time the following considerations may assist in removing objections in the minds of many :—

I. The judgment in question, instead of being improbable or unprecedented, is strikingly analogous to the previous dispensations of the Almighty, which appear so many types and shadows of this still future visitation.

The grand Principle in the Moral Government of the Deity,—that when communities have reached a certain maturity of guilt, future retribution is anticipated, and the present probationary state made the scene of judgment, was exemplified, under circumstances of remarkable suddenness and horror in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. In the impressive account given us of this awful judgment, the Almighty declares,—"*The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin is very grievous, and I will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me ;*" and, speaking after the manner of men, on finding that the wickedness of the country was too truly reported,—the sentence went forth.—"*The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. Then the*

LORD *rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven.*" And the following morning Abraham looked toward those cities, "*and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.*" In the utter destruction of the wicked,—in the sudden and unexpected character of the judgment,—and in the employment of supernatural agency for the protection of Lot's family, the overthrow of Sodom, bears a striking analogy to the "COMING OF THE SON OF MAN," and it is accordingly exhibited in this light by Peter and Jude,—"*And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ENSAMPLE unto those that after should live ungodly.*"—2 Pet. ii. 6.—(Jude i. 7.)

Another parallel instance is found in the overthrow of Pharaoh and his mighty host in the waters of the Red Sea, whilst pursuing the children of Israel. This judgment, likewise, *utterly* overwhelmed the enemies of the people of God, whilst the latter escaped in perfect safety,—"*By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians essaying to do were drowned.*" And it deserves especial notice, that a judicial blindness and obduracy, such as few nations have ever exhibited, was the precursor of this sudden and awful overthrow. Pharaoh and his mighty ones were not destroyed, until after they had again and again "*SINNED AGAINST THE LORD,*" by resisting His will in the face of the most convincing and miraculous declarations of that will by the hand of Moses.

Other instances which illustrate the same great Principle in the Moral Government of the world occur in the Scriptures. Such are the extermination of the Canaanites,—the threatened destruction of Nineveh,—and the unprecedented desolation, misery, and slaughter of the Jews themselves at the destruction of Jerusalem; but these I pass by, in order lastly to notice, that awful and truly universal destruction of mankind,

—the Deluge ! The scanty materials we possess of the Antediluvian History of the world,—the brief account given of the deluge itself,—and its vast distance in time from our own age, occasion this awful event to be little thought of by the Christian world ; yet in proportion, as it becomes the subject of our meditation, will it be found replete with instruction, interest, and profit.

This unparalleled visitation of Almighty wrath, just as the coming judgment, was caused by the extreme and universal wickedness of man,—“ *The earth was corrupt before God.*” “ *All flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth, and God repented that He had made man, and IT GRIEVED HIM TO THE HEART.*” “ *The end of all flesh is come before me.*” “ *I will destroy man from the face of the earth.*” This fearful declaration of the Almighty made no impression upon a guilty world, and at the appointed season,—“ *The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of Heaven were opened,*” and “ *the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and all the high hills that were under the whole Heaven were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing, and EVERY MAN.*” “ *All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land died, and Noah only remained, and they that were with him in the ark.*” The frequent repetition, in different phraseology, of the fact, that every living creature, except the inhabitants of the waters, perished on this occasion, seems designed to preclude all cavils and objections to that truth, and those Christians (*proh pudor !*) who have denied a universal deluge, would find it no easy matter to describe such an event in more explicit and unequivocal language.*

* I refer, especially to Dr. Pye Smith's recent work on Geology, in which I need scarcely say, that very eminent and pious man, has asserted at great length, that the Deluge was only a partial flood, and destroyed only a part of the world,—“ *Tell it not in Gath ; publish it not in the streets of Askelon.*”

It is plain, therefore, that the "COMING OF THE SON OF MAN," as interpreted in the foregoing pages, has had a *precedent* in the history of our world. The deluge of Noah was like that,—an utter destruction of mankind for their guilt, from which only Noah and his family were saved ; yea, more, it overwhelmed a world inconceivably more populous than has ever been the case since that period ; and the number of the saved, bears no proportion to the 144,000 Israelites who are "*sealed in their foreheads*," and the great multitude, which no man could number of Christian believers, who "*came out of great tribulation*." Whatever, then, may be the cavils and objections of "*men of this world*," let no believer in Inspiration ridicule the doctrine of a universal destruction of the world at the "REVELATION OF THE SON OF MAN," since the chief arguments against it, lie with equal or greater force against an event which has already occurred. True, it is enough to make the heart bleed, to *think* only of the desolation and slaughter of that day, "*when the slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth unto the other, and shall not be lamented, nor gathered, nor buried, but shall be as dung upon the earth*." But still, let me ask, is it more, is it so much, as the overthrow of the Deluge, when the earth was in the spring-tide of youth, when human life was reckoned by hundreds of years instead of scores, and the population of the globe thus incalculably surpassed anything which the coming era can exhibit? Yet all,—all these myriads were in a few days overwhelmed by the relentless waters,—the Great, the Noble, the Mighty, the Wise, the Lovely,—Families, Tribes, Nations, Empires,—ALL were suddenly cut off, and not one of those countless myriads escaped to tell to future ages, how surprize, alarm, terror, first prompting to vain efforts to escape, and then settling down in dumb despair,—successively filled a world.

II. The strongest evidence exists, that the same CAUSE which occasioned the foregoing judgments of Heaven, will, at the approaching era, exist to a far greater extent. I have already noticed, as each visitation came under consideration, the evident fact, that an awful maturity in guilt, was, in each case, the uniform precursor. Hence, were there any adequate ground for believing that, at the period of THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN, a similar ripeness or maturity in wickedness would be attained by mankind, this would constitute an additional argument for another similar departure from the ordinary procedure of the Deity. Accordingly, this fact admits of full and varied proof, and when the great day of the Lord arrives,—the transgression of the earth “*will be heavy upon it, and it shall not rise again.*”—(Isaiah xxiv. 20.)

The awful guilt of the world, which will hereafter once more provoke Almighty vengeance, may be classed under two heads:—that of a general rejection of Christianity, and that of setting up the Two Wild Beasts, whose history occupies so large a space in the Oracles of God.

1. Christianity,—the revelation of Infinite Bliss to fallen man, through faith in the blood of the Lamb, in connexion with a perfect communication of the Divine will, has failed—awfully failed, to effect the *spiritual* conversion of the world, or even to produce a general and marked improvement in the *moral* state of mankind. At first, it is true, the Gospel made rapid progress. Its triumphs, during the first three centuries, (symbolized by the “*white horse, and Him that sat thereon, who went forth conquering and to conquer,*”) constituted the most remarkable revolution which the world has ever witnessed. The Empire of the devil was shaken to its very centre, and a loud voice was heard in Heaven, “*Now is come Salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ.*” But, alas! the brief continuance of this triumphant state of things, serves only to render its sub-

sequent degeneracy more conspicuous. The depravity of mankind gradually corrupted the Gospel of Christ, and checked its progress. Superstitions, Heresies, and Corruptions sprung up in the fourth century in the Church. The WHITE HORSE gave place to one that was RED, "*and power was given to him to take peace from the earth, and that they [professing Christians] should kill one another.*" During the fifth century Religion still more rapidly declined; "doctrinal feuds and malignant passions involved the visible Church,"—and the close of the sixth century exhibited an almost total extinction of true piety throughout Africa and the East,—and in the West, at the same period, the mystery of iniquity was seated upon the ten-horned Beast, having a name upon her forehead, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." At this period, the unerring pen of Inspiration describes the Church of Christ, as having "*fled into the wilderness, where she is nourished a time, times, and half a time.*" The nations of Europe, and Asia, and Africa, previously so distinguished for their Christianity have, ever since, "*trodden under foot the holy city*" [*i.e.* Spiritual Jerusalem], and the servants of God for twelve centuries have constituted, comparatively, a small, despised, and persecuted band.

The civilized world, therefore, clearly have almost universally rejected Christianity. During the whole of the time, times, and half a time, "the two witnesses have prophesied" (though in sackcloth),—the Scriptures have been preached, and diffused,—and exemplified in the lives and labours of the Saints. Yet the Gospel has made no progress worthy of notice in the *spiritual* conversion of Europe or Asia, nor effected any real change in the *moral* condition of society. And with reference to the Heathen nations of the earth, we have the express testimony of Scripture, that ere the period of the HARVEST OF THE EARTH arrives, a similar rejection of Christ-

ianity will take place in their case :—“ *This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the earth for a witness unto [against] all nations : and then shall the end come.*”—Matt. xxiv. 14. That is, “previous to the COMING OF THE SON OF MAN, Christianity shall be brought before every nation under Heaven ; but, instead of their accepting it, they will, like the rest of the world, only aggravate their guilt, and justify their condemnation by rejecting it.”

2. The guilt of mankind has been displayed in far more awful colors in the rise of the ten-horned Beast of the sea, and the two-horned Beast of the earth.—Rev. xiii.

The first named image denotes—the corrupt and Anti-Christian despoticisms which have, for twelve centuries, reigned over mankind in Britain, and the rest of Europe. The power of the Gospel inflicted a mortal wound on this monster in the fourth century, “*which had the wound by a sword,*”—Rev. xiii. 14. ; but the apostacy which took place at the rise of Anti-Christ, A. D. 606, healed the deadly wound ; and from then till now “*all the world has worshipped the Beast, saying, Who is like unto the Beast ? who is able to make war with him ?*” “*And all that dwell upon the earth*” have “*worshipped him, whose names are not written in the book of life.*” Thus have all men incurred the awful crime of IDOLATRY ! And to what have they transferred their homage ?—“*A WILD BEAST, upon whose heads are names of BLASPHEMY,*”—who derives “*his power and throne from the dragon,*” who “*opens his mouth to blaspheme God and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in Heaven ;—who makes war with the Saints, and prevails against them ;—who ascends out of the bottomless pit, and goeth into perdition.*”—(Rev. xiii.)

Babylon the Great,—or, in other words, the Papal apostacy,—presents a still more awful load of guilt than the preceding monster. Never, alas ! was the adage more truly verified, “*the corruption of the best things are the worst.*”

This fearful perversion of Christianity,—the very masterpiece of Satanic craft,—has changed the Gospel of the grace of God into a system of Blasphemous Corruption,—Superstition,—and Despotism.—Its nature and guilt may be summed up in one word,—it is **ANTI-CHRIST** !

ALL that **CHRISTIANITY**,—the dispensation of grace and mercy from Heaven—is : **POPERY**,—though employing its terms, and professing its doctrines,—is the **EXACT REVERSE** ! **CHRISTIANITY**,—its command—its object—its results are **HOLINESS**. **POPERY** virtually abrogates the Law of God by its Penances—Absolutions—and Indulgences ;—aims at nothing beyond Rites and Outward Morality,—and produces—just so far as it prevails—unbelief, impenitence, and sin. **CHRISTIANITY**,—its nature and effects, are **SALVATION TO THE LOST** !—**POPERY**,—its very essence, is to wither and curse the Soul,—and, under its influence, men sink quietly and happily into Hell ! **CHRISTIANITY** is a vast and boundless display of the Glory of the Father, and the Glory and Deity of the Son :—**POPERY** robs God of his attributes, by placing them in the hands of Priests and Pontiffs,—and dethrones the Lord of Glory, to substitute a Queen of Heaven in His room ;—the disguised, but fierce and implacable foe, of God and Man ;—essence of all evil,—and unfathomable source of Wickedness and Misery—**HERE AND HEREAFTER** !!

What stronger proof, then, of the awful guilt of mankind need be found, than the mere fact that this is the system that, for twelve hundred years, has reigned over civilized man,—and now, in the nineteenth century, is spreading far and wide,—following Christianity like its evil genius, and blasting by its presence all good.

The fact then of the maturity of man's guilt appears plain, from their continued, and repeated, and general rejection of Christianity, and from their upholding the Anti-Christian

despotisms of Europe, and the awful apostacy of Popery ;—and all this in spite of the unexampled, the prodigious advancement of knowledge, intelligence, and activity of mind in every part of the civilized globe. This ripeness will still increase, until the period of retribution. The death of the witnesses,—the last effort of the Beast to crush true Religion,—the mission of the three unclean Spirits like unto frogs,—the consummation of the guilt of the world, by the battle of Armageddon,—and the fulfilment of the fearful characteristics of the last days, given by the Apostle (2 Tim. iii. 1—5), all these are yet future ;—and when, by these means, the cup of guilt shall be filled to the brim, the command will be given,—*“Thrust in thy sickle, and reap : for the time is come for thee to reap ; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth ; and the earth was reaped.”*—(Rev. xiv. 15, 16.)

III. The recent change in the aspect of affairs in Britain and the world, is anything but unfavourable to such a representation. Look where we will, Superstition and Despotism are rapidly spreading, and the interests of Liberty and Religion placed in jeopardy. What a fearful change have the signs of the times experienced in a few short years ! It seems as though the previous advancement of knowledge, liberty, and Christianity in the earth,—had alarmed the powers of Hell,—and, summoning all their strength, they were now preparing for another deadly struggle to retain the sovereignty of man. The grand colleagues of Satan, the Beast and the False Prophet, have already responded to the call, and exhibit, in England and the Continent, an appearance of activity, vigour, and hostility, which leave no doubt that a tremendous struggle, between the powers of Light and Darkness, is at hand. Think of the corrupt Superstitions, and despotic principles embraced by our own Establishment,—think of the tyrannical attempts now making by the Government of this

land ;—think of the vigour, activity, and hostility now displayed by Popish Missions ;—think of these things, and other kindred signs of the times, and then will be seen the grounds of the opinion,—that the death of the witnesses,—that last triumph of Despotism and Priestcraft over Liberty and Religion,—is fast advancing.

The true point of view, however, in which the present state of the world ought to be viewed, is the retrograde nature of the movement now taking place. It is not *merely* that Despotism, and Superstition, and Priestcraft, are rapidly spreading at home and abroad ; but that this is state of things, *in spite of*, and *in arrest of* the previous progress of Light and Liberty. Its guilt is thus aggravated, and its cure rendered hopeless.

Look at the state of the civilized world, ten, twenty, or thirty years back. It was in most respects the reverse of its present condition,—one of the giant Intellects of the present age thus eloquently spoke of it :—“There unquestionably gleams forth through the plainer lines, and through the mystical imagery of Prophecy, the vision of a better age, in which the application of the truths of religion to men’s minds will be irresistible. And what should more naturally be interpreted as one of the dawning signs of its approach, than a sudden wide movement to clear their intellects, and bring the heavenly light to shine close upon them, accompanied by a prodigious breaking up of the old system of the world.”* How justly might such anticipations have been indulged then !

Then Despotism appeared tottering to its fall,—Popery gradually, but certainly wasting away ;—Truth,—Liberty,—Christianity, spreading throughout the earth, aided by Missionary Societies, Bible Societies, Tract Societies, and innumerable other organized instruments of assault upon the

* Foster, on Popular Ignorance, p. 201.

powers of darkness,—and strong, and deadly, and incessant were the blows dealt by them upon the kingdom of darkness. But, alas ! what is the result ? All these united, and mighty, and heavenly agencies, after operating so long and so well, have issued in a relapse,—a frightful relapse ! This, then, I repeat, is the melancholy feature of the times, which cannot be mistaken, which leaves no hope, which robs the mind of every source of consolation, which makes the case desperate, and leaves us nothing to expect in the way of improvement, until the time, times, and half a time are finished,—the Church of Christ emerge from the wilderness,—the two witnesses cease to prophecy in sackcloth, and shut heaven that it rain not,—and the great earthquake destroy a tenth of the Great City,—speedily followed by the blast of the Seventh Trumpet, and introduction of the kingdom of God,—the opening of the Temple in Heaven, and the arrival of the time to reward the servants of God. Then will Religion within the Church revive,—then will Christianity spread, even while the vials are pouring out on the enemies of God, and the Battle of Armageddon is convulsing the earth, and the Harvest of the earth approaching,—“ *When thy judgments are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants thereof will learn wisdom.*”

